

Hierocles, of Alexandria, 5th cent.

HIEROCLES

B. 1. UPON THE *Oss. in stone*

Golden VERSES

OF THE

PYTHAGOREANS.

Translated immediately out of
the *GREEK* into *ENGLISH*.

*O vitæ Philosophia dux! O virtutum in-
dagatrix, expultrixq; vitiorum! Unus
dies bene & ex præceptis tuis altus pec-
canti immortalitati est anteponendus.*

Cicero Tusc. Quæst.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *M. Flesher*, for *Thomas Fickus*
Bookseller in *Oxford*, 1682.

05-2-41-15

English

Ch. Salomon

4-14-41

42992

TO MY

Most Worthy Friend, F. B.

OF THE

Middle - Temple, Esq;

Dear Sir,

THough Vertue it self
find but cold En-
tertainment in the
World, yet 'tis to
be hoped that the *Theory* of it
may be a more acceptable Guest.
Men love to study the *Geography*
of those rough Countries, which
they will not be at the trouble
to travail in. But whatever re-
ception this *Treatise* of *Morality*
meet with elsewhere, I dare as-
sure my self 'twill be highly wel-
come to you, whose Breast is the

A 3

Hospi-

The DEDICATION.

Hospitable Retreat of all the *Vertues*. In you they shine as perfectly as in their own *Ideas*; nay, *Morality* seems so far *adopted* into your very *Nature*, and so much one with your *Self*, that to embrace it would be a kind of *Self-love*. As you therefore have entirely *Devoted* your self to the *Vertues*, so are they now as entirely *Dedicated* to you. And as when seated in your *divine Breast*, like *Jewels* richly set, they invite *Beholders*; so now the *Inscription* of your *Name* will procure them *Value* and *Esteem* among all men, and the precious *Metal* will become a *Coin*.

And now I begin to fear lest what I intended as a *Monument* of my *Gratitude*, should be interpreted as an *Argument* of my *Ambition*, and I should be thought
kind

The DEDICATION.

kind only to my self in choos^{ing}
such a *Patron*.

But (*Sir*) the Devotional Ad-
dresses which the Pious *Votary*
makes to Heaven, are never the
less accepted, though in so do-
ing he persues his own greatest in-
terest and happiness. If the same
Altar to which I bring my Obla-
tion, prove also a *Sanctuary*, 'tis
my good Fortune rather than my
principal Design. That is purely to
serve and pleasure you, as disinte-
rested as *Platonick Love*, as unmer-
cenary as the Devotion of those
Heroes who could be eminently
Religious without a Heaven.

I desire your Pardon for draw-
ing you out of your belov'd Pri-
vacy by making your Name
publick, the peculiar Indearments
of your Friendship call'd for some
gratefull Acknowledgment ; and

The DEDICATION.

I could not think of a more futable Return, than to present you with this excellent *Moral Tract*, since your exemplary Conversation has been a living System of *Ethicks* to me.

I find my self here under a great temptation of speaking high things of you, but your incomparable Modesty will not give me leave, and your other Vertues come so near to absolute Perfection, that they exceed all the Characters of *Panegyrick*, and like a *Deity* would be disparaged by a Representation.

'Tis no more in my power to *Commend* you, than 'tis to *Imitate* you, I can only love and admire you, and therein I dare challenge any one to out-doe him, who is,

S I R,

*Your most Entirely
Devoted Servant*

THE PREFACE.

I *Design no other Apology for the Translation of this Divine Book, than its own great Excellency and Usefulness to the World. For since the principal end of Translation is to Communicate something to more which is too Excellent to be Engross'd by a few; and since its utmost Perfection lies in the attainment of its End, my Apology is as great as the nature of the Work is capable of, and Consequently nothing can be objected against this particular Undertaking, but what will equally reflect upon Translation in general.*

But

The PREFACE.

But perhaps it may be said, That although the Work it self need no Apology, yet the Undertaker of it may. I grant it, and 'tis in short this. I was not so ambitious of the performance, but I could willingly have resign'd both the Honour and the Trouble of it to a better Hand; but having long expected when some good natured Genius would prompt some better qualifi'd Person to do the World so great a Kindness, and doubting whether a Work so long unattempted, would ever be perform'd, I began to grow impatient, and like a restless Ghost, could not content my self till the divine Treasure were discover'd.

I know there are a sort of ill-natur'd Christians in the World who will think this Epithet too honourable for the Writing of an Heathen. Those I mean, who are so Eminent
for

THE PREFACE.

for their Censorious Invektives and Uncharitable Anathema's against the Populus terræ (as they phrase it) the Gentile World, as if they thought it the Characteristick note of a true Christian, zealously to run down the Morality of the Heathen, as they do of a true Protestant, to rail stoutly against Popery. I suppose the best title they would have afforded this divine Writer, would be that of Profane Author. But they must excuse me, I know not how to call such exalted Morality Profane, at least, as the word signifies in their Dictionary. Much less dare I joyn with them in their bitter Invektives and uncharitable Censures. All which I suppose may fall under these two Considerations. Either they relate to the Morality of Heathens, or to their Final state. Their Morality again may be doubly
con-

THE PREFACE.

consider'd; either in the Theory, or in the Practick. As to the first of these, they think they can never be Hyperbolical enough in setting out their Ignorance and Blindness. As to the second, their best actions can find no better name with them, than Splendida peccata, when they speak most favourably of them, and sometimes without any Premollition at all, they are down-right sins. I need not give any Instances of their Sanctifi'd Railery, every Dutch System overflows with it. However I will give you one single Instance, one of the most Emphatical I have ever met with, which may serve as a Specimen whereby to guess at the rest. Du Moulin in the 288 page of his Anatomy of Arminianism, has these words. Truly in my judgment the Heathen Judge, who in giving Sentence and dividing

THE PREFACE.

ding Possessions, does judge equally and well; is no more just before the tribunal of God, than the Thieves who equally and justly divide the Prey among themselves. So that you see Justice is no Vertue in a Heathen. An Absurdity which I cannot match with a parallel one, unless it be this, That Injustice is no sin in one of the Elect. Their last Censure respects the final state of Heathens. And here they doom them all to Hell as peremptorily as they do the Devils themselves.

'Tis neither my Design nor present Concern to engage in the Controversie about the final state of Heathens. All that I think fit to say of that, is only this, That I wish those who are so forward to condemn them here, would so live, and so
im-

THE PREFACE

improve those privileges which they enjoy above them, that they be not condemn'd by them hereafter. But though I wave this last Censure, yet I think my self obliged in Vindication of my present Undertaking, to insist a little on the former. For if the wisest of the Heathen were so blind and ignorant as some make them, and their most Heroical Vertues but splendid Sins, certainly the best of their Morality would not be worth reading, much less translating.

I shall therefore consider the Morality of the Heathen both in the Theory and in the Practick. Concerning the Theory I shall endeavour to make good this Proposition. That 'tis possible by due Advertency to the light of Nature, or the dictates of natural Reason, sufficiently to discern between Good and Evil.

Con-

The PREFACE

Concerning the Practick this, That the actions of the Heathen which were conformable to this light of Nature, were not Splendida peccata, but truly and properly Vertues.

I begin with the first of these. That there is such a thing as Νόμος Ἐμφυτος, or law of Nature, is here supposed in the Proposition. The thing affirm'd is the possibility of sufficiently discerning between Good and Evil by it. This I will make Evident three ways.

1. By the Authority of expresse Scripture.
2. By one demonstrative Reason.
3. By an Appeal to the writings of the Heathen.

*First, I urge that known place in the 2d. of the Romans. For when
the*

The P R E F A C E.

the Gentiles which have not the Law, doe by Nature the things contain'd in the Law, these having not the Law are a Law unto themselves ; Which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conscience also bearing them witness , and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. *This Scripture proves my second Proposition as well as my first. For if they perform the things contain'd in the Law, they doe good works, and avoid sin. For herein consists the whole Law. The next place is in the 14th. of the Acts. Where Saint Paul speaking to the men of Lystra concerning the ignorance of the Heathen World, yet says, Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, ἀπαρδείκνυσεν ἐνέργειαν in that he did good from Heaven,*

The P R E F A C E.

ven, &c. which words can bear no other tolerable sense but this. That the ordinary works of Nature give sufficient testimony of the divine Omnipotence, Goodness and Wisdom. Which though few did consider and improve as they ought and might, yet nevertheless they who have this Testimony have means in themselves absolutely sufficient, whereby they may know, believe in, and worship God.

I shall alledge but one place more which is in the 1st. of the Romans, where St. Paul, speaking of the abominations practis'd among the Heathen, says, that they hold the truth in unrighteousness. And in the following Verse he gives this reason for it, Διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, Because that which may be known and ought to be known of God (For the word signifies both) is manifest in
a *them.*

The P R E F A C E.

them, for God hath shew'd it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his Eternal power and Godhead: So that they are without excuse. *Ἐἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὰς ἀναπολόγητες.* *In which Phrase is not meant (as some blasphemously and absurdly assert) the end which God aim'd at in manifesting himself to the Gentiles, but only the Event of that manifestation, as Curcellæus well distinguishes in his excellent Dissertation De necessitate Cognitionis Christi. I insist chiefly on the last words of the Text. From which I form this Argument which I take to be as clear a Demonstration as any in Euclid.*

That

The PREFACE.

That manifestation of God which is sufficient to leave any void of excuse, is also sufficient to direct them in their duty.

But the manifestation which the Heathen had of God, was sufficient to leave them void of excuse.

Therefore the manifestation which the Heathen had of God, was sufficient to direct them in their duty.

The Assumption is in the Text. The Proposition is almost Self-evident. For if that manifestation of God, which is sufficient to leave any void of excuse, be not sufficient to direct them in their duty (which is the contradictory Proposition) then they have Insufficiency to plead, which is the greatest excuse. And so the Proposition will contradict it self. A Man is then only said to be left without excuse when he is sufficiently capacitated both to know

The P R E F A C E.

and perform his duty, and when the only reason why he does neither is his own avoidable negligence. There can be no greater excuse than unavoidable Impotence or Ignorance.

Thus it appears from express Scripture, that 'tis possible by due advertency to the light of Nature, sufficiently to discern between Good and Evil. I proceed now to demonstrate the same by reason. And here among a multitude of Arguments which offer themselves to my Consideration, I shall content my self with one, because I will not be over-tedious. It is taken from the nature of God's gifts, which as they are always design'd for the good of Men, so are they always adapted and proportionated to the good for which they are design'd. The first
can-

The PREFACE.

cannot be deny'd without manifest injury to the divine Goodness; nor the second without disparagement to his Wisdom. Since therefore the light of Nature is one of God's gifts, whosoever denies the possibility of discerning sufficiently between Good and Evil by due advertency to it, must necessarily gravel himself upon one of these Absurdities. Either he must say that God did not design this light for Man's direction, and then why did he give it him? it having not the least aptness to any other end. Or if he did, yet that it is not sufficient; and then why did God design it for such an end? I need not apply myself to the first part of the Dilemma, for that the light of Nature was design'd by God for Man's direction, is plain even by the light of Nature. Τέτον ἑπ' ἡμετέραν ἡμῶν ὁ θεὸς ἐπέστη, τέτον παραγωγὴν καὶ διδασκαλὴν.

The P R E F A C E.

says Heirotles. The latter part I perceive, lies open to this Exception. That what God designs for the attainment of any end, is then only of necessity sufficient, when taken adequately and intirely. But now the whole which God design'd for Man's direction, is not the light of Nature alone, but the light of Nature in Conjunction with that of Revelation. Were these two lights always inseparably united, I confess there would be some colour in the Evasion: But to this I oppose God's Dispensation with our fore-fathers from the beginning of the World till the promulgation of the Law by Moses, which was about 2450 years. It is plain that the whole which God design'd for their direction, was only the law of Nature, and consequently by the very supposition of the Objection it was sufficient.

I come

The PREFACE.

I come now to appeal to the writings of the Heathen, wherein they give undeniable Evidence of what I have been hitherto proving for them, (viz.) That 'tis possible by due advertency to the light of Nature sufficiently to discern between Good and Evil. I say possible: For I did not undertake to prove, neither is it my opinion that the law of Nature was engraven upon the hearts of Men in as fair Characters as upon the two tables of Stone. For then there would have been little or no use of Revelation: I have what I contend for, if it was so legible, that by diligence and advertency they might read their duty. That this is possible, is evident beyond all contradiction, because many of them did do it. And that many of them did so, appears from their

The PREFACE.

Writings, in which is contain'd the whole Moral Law, and that not only in its integral parts, but in its utmost intention. There is not one precept of Christianity so exalted and Heroical but may be parallel'd in a Heathen. No man can deny this who has ever read the Morals of Plutarch, Seneca, Epictetus, Cicero, and the rest. They teach not only outward Conformity, but also inward Purity.

—Scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum
Facti crimen habet——

says Juvenal.

Compositum jus fasq; animi, Sanctosq; recessus
Mentis, & incoctum generoso pectus honesto:

Hæc cedo, ut admoveam templis, & farre li-
tabo, *says Persius.*

Τιμῶσις τὸ διὸν ἀρετὰ, τὰν τῶ διῶ τὸ διάνοιαν
ἐμμελῶσις, *says Hierocles; And again*
Καὶ τὴν παντασίαν αὐτῶν τὴν τοιούτῃ προσηγορί-
μεθα, &c. *They*

The PREFACE.

They recommend and enjoyn the love of Enemies (which of all Doctrines is thought the most peculiarly Christian) and conclude that a wise and good man ought to have no Enemy. Διὸ καὶ λέγει ὁ ῥηδῶς, ὡς ἐδείς ἐχθρὸς τῷ στυδαίῳ, εἰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθὸν φιλεῖ, ἐδὲ τὸ κακὸν ἐχθρὸν τίθει, μιμέμεθα καὶ ἐν τοῖς τὸ φιλίας μέτροις τὸ δῖον, ὅς μοι μὲν ἐδὶνα ἀνθρώπων, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν διαφιέροντος ἀπαύζει. *What Father of the Church could have spoken more Divinely? It is exactly parallel to that of our Blessed Saviour, Love your enemies, &c. that ye may be the Children of your Father which is in heaven, &c. Much of this kind is to be seen in Plutarch. What high-raised notions of Vertue, what Angelical Precepts, what abstractions from Sense, what immaterial transportations are to be found in Hea-*
then

THE PREFACE.

then Writers! One would think that with St. Paul they had been wrapt up into the third Heaven, and learnt their Divinity from the immediate intuition of God. They discourse so much like Seraphims and the most ecstasied Order of Intelligences. What can be more divine than that Character which Seneca gives of a good man in his Book de Vitâ Beata? He that can look upon death, and see his face with the same countenance with which he hears its story; that can endure all the labours of his life with his soul supporting his body; that can equally despise riches when he has them, and when he has them not; that is not sadder if they lie in his Neighbour's trunks, nor more haughty if they shine round about his own walls; he
that

The P R E F A C E.

that is neither moved with good fortune coming to him, nor going from him; that can look upon another man's Lands evenly and pleasingly as if they were his own, and yet look upon his own and use them too, just as if they were another man's; that neither spends his Goods prodigally and like a fool, nor yet keeps them avariciously and like a wretch; that weighs not benefits by weight and number, but by the mind and circumstances of him who gives them; that never thinks his Charity expensive if a worthy person be the receiver; he that does nothing for Opinion's sake, but every thing for Conscience, being as curious of his thoughts as of his actings in Markets and Theatres, and is as much in awe
of

The P R E F A C E.

of himself as of a whole Assembly ; he that knows God looks on, and contrives his secret affairs as in his presence ; that eats and drinks because he needs it, not to serve a lust or load his belly ; he that is bountifull and chearfull to his Friends, and charitable and apt to forgive his Enemies ; that loves his Country, and obeys his Prince, and desires and endeavours nothing more than that he may doe honour to God.

What exalted thoughts of Vertue had Aristotle when he made the very formality of Happiness consist in the exercise of it !

Ἡ ἰνδαμυνία ὅτιν ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ ἀρετῶν ἀρίστῳ καὶ τελειοτάτῳ, ἐν βίῳ τελείῳ.

I take this to be the most noble and sublime conception of Vertue that ever was or can be framed by the mind of man. 'Tis true the Wise

man

The P R E F A C E.

man tells us Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; that is, they are attended with pleasure and peace. And the Psalmist says, Keep innocency and take heed to the thing that is right, for that will bring a man peace at the last. But that the exercise of Vertue should not only be attended with, but be all one with Happiness it self, is such a superlative Encomium of it, that neither the love nor the contemplation of a Sераphim can suggest a greater. Hierocles also soars mighty high, when he says that the pleasure of a virtuous man resembles the complacency which God takes in himself, τὸ ἀνδρὸς ἡδονὴ τὴν θεῶν εὐεργουμένων μεμνῆσθαι. And when he says that Vertue is the Image of God in the rational Soul, Ἔστι γὰρ ἀρετὴ εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν

ψυχῇ

The PREFACE.

ψυχῇ λογικῇ. For this reason he calls
 our deviation from Vertue an A-
 postasie from God, and the moulting
 of the plumes of the Soul, ἡ ἀπο-
 στὰς ψυχῆς, καὶ ἡ ἀποσπάρσις.

These few Instances which I have
 given, not to mention any more,
 may suffice to shew what excellent
 Idea's of Vertue the Heathen had,
 and how far 'tis possible for a man
 to arrive in the knowledge of what
 is good by the due improvement of
 this least talent, the light of Na-
 ture. That wherein they were ge-
 nerally most defective was the no-
 tion of God. And yet even here
 the wiser Pagans were accurate
 enough in their conceptions, and
 (except only the inconceivable
 Mystery of the Trinity) thought
 as well of God as any Chri-
 stian whatsoever; nay, and better
 than a great many of them doe.

They

THE PREFACE.

They acknowledg'd God in all his glorious attributes, that of his unity or oneliness not excepted. Neither does the Pagan Polytheism at all contradict this assertion, if rightly understood. For they did not (as some take for granted) universally assert Many Unmade, Self-existent, independent Deities, as so many partial Causes of the World. But only a plurality of Inferiour Deities subordinate to one Supreme, who was call'd the King and Father of All. This is clear from Aristotle's Exposition and Confutation of πολλαὶ ἀρχαὶ, from Hesiod's Θεογονία, from the Pagan's Creed in Maximus Tyrius, and many other Instances of Antiquity which might be produced. The Egyptians themselves who were the most Polytheistical of all Nations, did not suppose a multitude of unmade self-existent Deities,
but

The P R E F A C E.

but acknowledg'd one Supreme universal and All-comprehending Numen, as is Evident from that Memorable Inscription upon the Temple at Sais, which Plutarch records. Ἐγὼ εἰμι πᾶν τὸ γεγονός, καὶ ὄν, καὶ ἐσόμενον, καὶ τὸ ἐμὸν πέπλον ἐδείξω πῶς θνητὸς ἀπεκάλυψεν. I am all that hath been, is, and shall be, and my Veil, no mortal hath ever yet uncover'd. That also of Sophocles is very exprefs to this purpose.

*Εἰς τοὺς ἀληθείαισι, Εἰς ὃν Θεὸς
Ὅς ἔργον τ' ἐτόλξε καὶ γαῖαν μακρὰν
Πόντον τε χαροπὸν οἶδ' ἡμεῖς κἀνέμων βίαν.*

And to go no further than my own Authour, he acknowledges but one supreme God, whom he calls δημιουργός, θεός, διῶν, θεός ὑπατάς, κοσμοποιός, ἀεσιτέχνης, and the like. But I insist no longer on this.

I pro-

The PREFACE.

I proceed to my last Proposition, that the actions of the Heathen which were conformable to the light of Nature, were not Splendida peccata, but truly and properly Vertues. And why not, since by Vertue we neither do nor can mean any thing else but what is done agreeably to right reason? But to address my self a little closer to the business, if the actions of the Heathen, conformable to the light of Nature, were not truly and properly Vertues, the defect must be either in the matter of them, or in the manner of performance. Not in the matter, for then they would not be conformable to the law of Nature, which is contrary to the Supposition. For the law of Nature is the self-same with that deliver'd upon Mount Sinai,

b *may*

The P R E F A C E.

nay, the written Law was but a Transcript of the natural, as the natural was but a Transcript of God's essential holiness. This I cannot better express than in the words of Hierocles, λόγῳ ᾧ ὁρθῶ πείθεσθαι, καὶ Θεῷ, ταυτὸν ἔχει, &c. To act according to the dictates of right reason, is the same as to obey God. For the rational Nature being once rais'd to the possession of its native brightness, wills and acts according to the determinations of the Divine Law and Pleasure: And the holy Soul that thus participates of the Deity, becomes in every thing conformable to the mind of God, and frames the whole system and comprehension of its actions by the conduct and guidance of that Eternal Splendor. Since then the law of Nature

ture

THE PREFACE.

ture is all one with the law of God, that action which is conformable to the one, is so to the other, and consequently there is no defect in the matter.

Neither in the manner of performance. For the requisites to the manner of performing a vertuous action are, that it be done knowingly, freely, and for Vertue's sake. All which may easily be supposed to concur in a Heathen. Some I know will have a 4th. Requisite added, an intention of doing what is good out of love to God, and to his glory. In answer to this I suppose two things as certain and unquestionable. 1. That the law of Nature contains a special precept of loving God who is the Author of Nature. 2. That every action whereby any other natural precept is fulfill'd, does of its own

The P R E F A C E.

nature tend to the glory of God, in as much as the Divine Will is fulfill'd by it, though this be not formally intended by the Agent. This premised, I say first that 'tis agreeable highly agreeable to the law of Nature and right reason, that a man shou'd refer all that he does to God as to the last end, because this relation is included in the love of God above all. 2. Yet right reason does not precisely require that this intention should be conjoyn'd either formally or virtually with every Moral action, but it suffices if there be no contrary intention. So that if a man does what is agreeable to right reason because it is agreeable, he does well, though he does not think of God at that present, neither before, so that the past love of God should influence his action. The reasons are 1. because

The PREFACE.

cause 'tis hardly possible to have such a constant intention; 2. because to constitute the nature of Sin which is contrary, 'tis not required that there be an intention of transgressing the dictates of natural reason, much less an intention of offending God. Whence I gather that those Heathens who squared their actions to the law of natural reason, and yet had not that intention of referring all to God, although they did not act according to the highest perfection, yet did not sin, but doe well, and in a great measure please God. Though I confess I see no reason why a Heathen may not have this intention as well as a Christian. And if he has, as he will equal him in that respect, so certainly the disadvantages which are on his side will give a peculiar lustre to his

The PREFACE.

Vertues, which the other will want, who has clearer discoveries to direct him, and greater hopes to encourage him in the ways of Vertue.

I have detain'd the Reader too long in the outer Court, but I have only two things more to premise and then I shall let him into the Sanctum Sanctorum. One is concerning the Book translated, and the other concerning the Translation. I design not any formal Panegyrick on the first of these, both because such Harangues look as suspicious, and are commonly as little credited as the set Encomiums of a Funeral Sermon; and because the greatest commendation which I can give it, is to think that it does not stand in need of any. I shall therefore only give a short Account of the scope and order

The PREFACE.

der of the whole, which is this. In the first place he treats of the offices due to God, our Parents, Friends and Neighbours, and next of the manners and institution of our private life. Whereof he makes two degrees, Action and Contemplation. Proportionably to these two degrees of life he distinguishes Virtue into Civil and Divine, or which is all one Purgative and Perfective. The one consists in mortifying and subduing our sensitive Passions, &c. the other in unions and adherences to God. Hence I suppose Divines took occasion of distinguishing the degrees of Religion into the Purgative, Illuminative and Unitive way. This last is better conceiv'd than express'd, the Idea of it being so fine and Spiritual, that no Tongue nor Pen can ever pourtray a lively representation

b 4

THE PREFACE.

sentation of it. That which comes nearest to it, is that admirable description which that Angelical Writer Dr. Taylor gives of it in these words. It is a Prayer of quietness and silence, and a Meditation extraordinary, a Discourse without variety, a Vision and Intuition of Divine excellencies, an immediate entry into an Orb of light, and a resolution of all our faculties into sweetnesses, affections and starings upon the Divine beauty; and is carried on to Ecstasies, raptures, suspensions, elevations, abstractions, and apprehensions beatifical. I know those who are unacquainted with the inexpressible exaltations of Contemplation and Seraphick love, will think this downright raving Non-sense, but without question there is such a thing

The P R E F A C E.

thing as is here described, though I confess withall 'tis a kind of Divine madness. Hence Plato in his Phæd. makes this a Species of madness, where he says, *Μανίας ὅ ἐστιν δύο ἡ μὲν καὶ νοσημάτων ἀνθρωπίνων, ἡ δὲ καὶ θείας Ἰεράλλας.* Meaning that persons eminently Religious are Divina Patientes, suffer a ravishment of sense, and turn Pathicks in Devotion.

Now concerning my Translation I have this to say. 1. That I have drawn this Piece immediately from the Prototype and not at second hand. And indeed I found a necessity of doing so; For Curterius the Latin Interpreter is often mistaken in the true sense of the Author, and would have prov'd an Ignis fatuus to me if I had follow'd him. For instance, in the

The PREFACE.

164 page, you have this expression, τὸ εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι καταφυγὴν, which he renders quod effugium nullum sit, which interpretation neither the Context nor the Greek will bear. Many more such mistakes there are which I leave to the Critical Reader. 2. That I have follow'd the Platonick Air and Mode of speaking, which as all know who are conversant in those Writings) was something Mystical and Enthysiastick. This I mention to prevent the Objection of some, who might be apt to charge me with obscurity of Style. I grant many things might have been deliver'd more openly and clearly, but then I must have deserted the peculiar Genius of my Author, which ought always to be Sacred and Inviolable.

THE

THE
Golden VERSES
OF THE
PYTHAGOREANS.

First the Immortal Gods as
rank'd by Law
Honour, and use an Oath with
holy awe.
Then honour *Heroes* which Man-
kind excell,
And *Dæmons* of the Earth, by li-
ving well.
Your Parents next, and those of
nearest blood,
Then other Friends regard, as they
are good.

Yield

The Golden Verses.

Yield to mild words and offices
of love,

Do not for little faults your Friend
remove.

This is no more than what in you
does lye,

For Power dwells hardby necessity.

Doc these things so; but these
restrain you must,

Your Appetite, your Sleep, Anger
and Lust.

From filthy actions at all times
forbear,

Whether with others, or alone
you are,

And of all things your self learn
to revere.

In Deed and Word to Justice
have an eye,

Do not the least thing unadvisedly.

But

The Golden Verses.

But know that all must to the
Shades below,
That Riches sometimes ebb, and
sometimes flow.

Bear patiently what Ill by Heaven
is sent,

And add not to your Grievs by
discontent.

Yet rid them if you can, but know
withall,

Few of those Thunder-storms on
good men fall.

Oft good and ill do in discourse
unite,

Be not too apt t'admire, nor yet
to slight.

But if through errour any speak
amiss,

Endure't with mildness, but be
sure of this,

That none by word or action
you entice

To doe, or speak to your own
prejudice. Think

The Golden Verses.

Think before action, Folly to
prevent,
Rash words and acts are their
own punishment.
That doe, which done, after
you'll ne'r repent.
That which you know not do not
undertake,
But learn what's fit, if Life you'll
pleasant make.
Health is a thing you ought not
to despise,
In Diet use a mean and exer-
cise;
And that's a mean, whence does
no damage rise.
Be neat, but not luxurious in your
fare,
How you incur Mens Censure
have a care.
Let not thy 'state in ill tim'd treats
be spent,
Like one that knows not what's
magnificent. Nor

The Golden Verses.

Nor by a thrift untimely rake too
clean,

'Tis best in every thing to use a
mean.

Be not mischievous to your self ;
advise

Before you act, and never let your
eyes

The sweet refreshings of soft
slumber taste,

Till you have thrice severe re-
flexions past

On th' actions of the day from
first to last.

Wherein have I transgress'd? what
done have I?

What duty unperform'd have I
past by?

And if your actions ill on search
you find,

Let Grief; if good, let Joy pos-
sess your mind.

This

The Golden Verses.

This doe, this think, to this your
heart incline,

This way will lead you to the life
Divine.

Believ't, I swear by him who did
us shew

The mystery of Four, whence all
things flow.

Then to your work, having pray'd
Heaven to send

On what you undertake, an hap-
py end.

This Course if you observe, you
shall know then

The constitution both of Gods
and Men.

The due extent of all things you
shall see.

And *Nature* in her Uniformi-
tie.

That so your Ignorance may not
suggest

Vain hopes of what you cannot
be posselt. You'll

The Golden Verses.

You'll see how poor unfortu-
nate Mankind
To hurt themselves are studi-
ously inclin'd,
To all approaching good, both
deaf and blind.
The way to cure their Ills is known
to few,
Such a besotting fate does men
pursue.
They're on Cylinders still roll'd
up and down,
And with full tides of Evil over-
flown.
A cursed inbred Strife does lurk
within,
The cause of all this Misery and
Sin.
Which must not be provok'd to
open field,
The way to Conquer here's, to
fly, and yield.

c

And

The Golden Verses.

And now from Ill, great Father,
set us free,
Or teach us all to know our Selves
and Thee.
Courage my Soul; Great *Jove* is
their Allie,
Their duty who by Nature's light
descry.
These Rules if to that Number
you retain,
You'll keep, and purge your Soul
from every stain.
Abstain from Meats which you
forbidden find
In our Traditions, wherein are
defin'd
The *Purgings* and *Solution* of
the Mind.
Consider this; then in the highest
Sphere
Enthroned your Reason, the best
Charioteer.

So

The Golden Verses.

So when unbody'd you shall free-
ly rove
In the unbounded Regions a-
bove,
You an Immortal God shall then
Commence,
Advanc'd beyond Mortality and
Sense.

The INTRODUCTION.

P*hilosophy is both the Purification and Perfection of humane Life. The Purification as it frees it from the material and brute tendencies of the mortal Body. The Perfection as it restores it to its own primitive excellency, and the participation of the divine Image. Both these are best effected by Vertue and Truth.*

The former calms all disorders of the Passions, the latter (if it meet with a well disposed mind) introduces the divine form. 'Tis necessary therefore in order to that Science which must both Purifie and Perfect us, that we have some short sententious Rules or artificial Aphorisms, by whose direction we may in an orderly and easie progress arrive to the end of an happy life. Now amongst all those rules which have a general aspect upon all Philosophy, I think the Pythagorick Verses,

The Introduction.

ses, deservedly call'd Golden, may justly claim the precedency. For they contain the principal Maxims of all Philosophy whether Speculative or Practical. Whereby a man may possess himself of Truth and Vertue, enjoy himself in Purity, live happy in the likeness of God, and (as Plato's Timæus says, a Critical Professor of the Pythagorical Institutions) being made sound and intire, may attain to the form of the primitive habit.

As for his Method he begins with the precepts of Practical Vertue. For we must first subdue the brute within us, and shake off all sluggishness from our minds, and then addict our selves to the knowledge of more divine things. For as a blear Eye cannot behold a very bright object till it be purged, so a Soul not yet clarifi'd and refined by Vertue, is not qualifi'd to gaze on the beauty of Truth.

There's

The Introduction.

There's too much disproportion between pure and impure, than that one should reach the other. And whereas Practical Philosophy is the parent of Vertue, and Speculative of Truth, thence we find in his Verses where he had ended his Instructions about Civil Vertue, he calls the former Humane, but the latter he honours with the title of Divine, in these words,

*This doe, this think, to this your heart incline,
This way will lead you to the life Divine.*

The first step therefore to the Divine Nature, is to rise up to the dignity of the Humane. Now that which makes a man good is Civil Vertue, but that which deifies him, are those Sciences which advance him to the Divine. And since the order of Ascent requires that small things be pass'd over before greater, therefore in the Pythagorick precepts Moral institutions have the first place,

The Introduction.

place, that so from what is of greatest use in common life, we may learn to ascend to the likeness of God. And this is the scope and order of the Verses, to stamp the Auditors with the character of a Philosopher, before they proceed to any other exhortations. They are call'd Golden because they are the best of all Verses, and altogether Divine. So among the ages of the World we call that Golden which was the best, differencing the manners of men according to the Analogy of Metals. Besides, Gold is a thing that is free from dross, and without mixture of earth, at least not so much allai'd with it as those other Metals which are nearer of kin to it, and consequently of meaner extract, (viz.) Silver, Brass and Iron. Among which on this account also, Gold has by Nature, the prebeminence, because it never contracts rust. Whereas every one of the other
is

The Introduction.

is so far liable to it, as it partakes of earth. There being therefore a resemblance between rust which partakes of the earth, and Vice which arises from material Concretions, the age which is holy and pure, and manners void of all wickedness, are properly styled Golden. And in like manner these Verses being good and excellent all throughout, are intitled Golden and Divine. For there is not in them as in some other things, a mixture of good and not good. But they all in like manner set forth Purity of life, lead us on to the participation of the Divine Likeness, and inform us of the most perfect end of the Pythagorean Philosophy. As will appear from the particular exposition of them, which follows.

HIEROCLES

Upon the

Golden VERSES

Of the

PYTHAGOREANS.

First, HONOUR THE IMMORTAL
GODS AS THEY ARE DISPOSED
BY THE LAW.

First, *The Immortal Gods as rank'd by Law
Honour.*

Since Piety is the great leading virtue as
having the most immediate relation
to God, it is deservedly made the mat-
ter of the first exhortation in these Verses,
that we may know how we ought to
HONOUR the GODS which are in the
world, according to that intimate order
which the LAW of Creation has interwoven

B

with

2 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

with their Essences, having assign'd the first Sphere to some, the second to others, and so on, till all the Celestial circles be fill'd up. For to acknowledge and HONOUR them suitably to the several stations where in their Maker and Parent has set them, is to obey the divine LAW and to give them true HONOUR. Not to extoll their dignity above measure, nor to entertain diminishing thoughts concerning them ; but to think them to be, what indeed they are, and that they retain their allotted station, and to refer this HONOUR to the only maker of them, whom you may properly call the God of gods, the Supreme and best God. But the only way to find out the true dignity of that God who was the most artificial framer of the Universe is, to assert him the Author of those Intelligent beings which are immutable. For to those the Verses give the title of IMMORTAL GODS, who always and in equall manner Contemplate the great God their Maker, and are constantly intent upon his goodness ; so that they are secure from either Change or Separation, being as it were the images of the *All-productive* Cause, neither disturb'd with Passion, nor tainted with Evil. For 'tis fit God should produce some such images of himself, and
not

not that all should be mutable and obnoxious to Passions which would incline them to evil. Of the latter sort are the Souls of men, the meanest of Intelligent beings. Of the former those IMMORTAL GODS which are the highest. Neither is the title of IMMORTAL GODS intended to distinguish them from humane Souls, but only to shew that they incessantly enjoy the divine felicity, and never forget either their own Nature or their Father's goodness. Whereas, the souls of men are subject to passions, whence it comes to pass that they sometimes attend to God and their own excellency, and sometimes are diverted from both.

Upon this account the Souls of men may with parity be call'd Mortal gods, because they dye sometimes when they quit the happiness and sanctity of the divine life by aversion from God, and sometimes revive by returning to him. So that they are said to live when they enjoy the divine life, and also to die (as far as an immortal nature may be capable of death) not because they cease to be, but because they degenerate from the excellency of life. For the death of an Intelligent being, is to be without God and reason, which privation is attended with a disorder and mutiny of

4 Hierocles upon the golden Vervess

the passions. For when better things are unknown, there is a necessity of being enslaved to worse. From which there is no other way to be redeem'd than by recollection to return to ones self and God.

Moreover, 'tis necessary that between those which we call IMMORTAL and those we call Mortal gods there intercede another sort, of greater excellency than Man, and yet short of a God, which as a middle link may so couple the two extremes, that the whole Intelligent nature may be in a right union with it self. Wherefore this middle Nature is not at any time wholly ignorant of God, nor yet has an altogether unchangeable and equall knowledge of him, but always actually considers him; yet more or less at divers seasons. Now in regard it has always an actual knowledge of God, it excells the humane Nature; but yet as it is mutable and unequall, it falls short of the Divine. And this middle Station it holds by the law of its Constitution, neither for its proficiency advanced above the humane, nor for its negligence degraded below the divine Nature. For all the Intelligent part of the Creation bears the image of their Maker, God. But those of the first rank are the pure image, those of the middle, the middle

dle image, those of the third, the last image of the divinity. And of these three sorts of beings, the first takes in those which the Verse calls IMMORTAL GODS, the middle the ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES, and the last the DEMONS of the EARTH; as we shall see by and by.

But now let us return to the first thing in hand; Namely, to consider what is meant by the LAW and the ORDER of it; and also what is that HONOUR which is given according to that order.

By LAW here, is to be understood the All-producing mind, and the divine Will, to which every thing continually owes its production and conservation. The ORDER of this LAW, is that whereby the Parent of all things has disposed the IMMORTAL GODS in several degrees. For although with respect to the whole Intelligent kind of the Creation they have all supremacy of Station, yet if compared to one another, they differ according as they partake more or less of the divine image. The difference of these natures is attested to by the very order of the Celestial Orbs, which are so disposed according to their Essence and Vigour, that the LAW is to be seen in their Essence, and the ORDER is coeval with their admirable distinction. For

6 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

they were not produced fortuitously and then ranged into Order afterwards, but receiv'd their Order and Being together; as if Heaven were an Animal, and these the several members which so retain their Connexion in their specifical distinction and conjunction, that 'tis impossible to imagine they should alter their Situation without the dissolution of the Universe. Which can never happen since the first cause of them is altogether immutable both as to his Essence and as to his Power; and since his goodness is not adventitious but essential to him, whereby he promotes the welfare of all things. For there can be no other reasonable cause alledg'd of the worlds Production, besides the essential goodness of God. For God is naturally good, and consequently cannot possibly conceive any envy or hatred against the condition of any Creature. Besides, whatever other causes are assign'd for the production of things besides the divine goodness, would rather become the necessities of men than the majesty of God. Now, God being thus naturally good, first produced those beings which most resemble himself, next those of a middle likeness, and last of all those which are at the greatest remove from the divine likeness

ness of all them that bear his image. Such equall pace did the order of things keep with their Essences, that what was more excellent took place of what was less; and that not only in the whole kinds, but in the Individuals of each species. For the ORDER of things was not owing to Chance, nor to an after-resolution, but 'twas the LAW of the Creation which variously order'd things according to the dignity of their natures.

Hence 'tis that the Precept of honouring according to the LAW, does not only refer to the IMMORTAL GODS, but is to be understood in Common, both of the ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES, and the SOULS of Men. For there is a multitude of Species under every Genus, rank'd according to greater or less dignity. And this is the nature and ORDER of Intelligent Beings.

But you'll ask what's the LAW and the HONOUR appendant to it? We answer again, that by LAW is meant, the unalterable and productive power of God, which gave being to the divine Off-spring, and set them in an eternal and unchangeable order. By HONOUR agreeable to the LAW, is meant, the knowledge of their essences which are honour'd, and an imitation of

8 Hierocles upon the golden Vases

all their practicable excellencies. For whom we love we endeavour what we can to resemble, and the only way we have of giving HONOUR to one that's above all want, is to receive that good which he reaches out to us. For you must not think you HONOUR God by giving him any thing, but by qualifying your self to receive from him. For as the *Pythagoreans* say, the best way of Honouring God, is by conforming your mind to him. Whosoever HONOURS God as if he needed it, does by consequence make himself greater than God. Besides, God is not at all Honour'd by the most costly oblations, unless they proceed from a divinely disposed mind. The gifts and sacrifices of Fools are only fewel for the flames, and the Offerings which they hang up in the Temple, serve only to enrich the Sacrilegious. But a divine disposition of mind lays a sure foundation, since it unites a Man to God. For 'tis necessary that every thing have a tendency to its like.

Hence the Priest only is counted the Wise man, the Friend of God, and one peculiarly qualifi'd to make addressees to Heaven. For he only knows how to HONOUR, who does not confound the excellencies of them to whom HONOUR

is due, who in the first place makes an Oblation of himself, works his Soul into a sacred Statue, and prepares his mind as a Temple for the reception of the divine light. What such acceptable Present can you make from the things which are without, such as may become an Image ingrafted (as it were) into the Divinity, or a gift that may be made one with God? All which is necessarily verified in an intelligent and purifi'd nature. For as the same *Pythagoreans* use to say, God has not on earth a place more properly his own, than a pure Soul. Agreeable hereto are the words of the Oracle,

*In pious hearts I love, as well
As in my heaven it self, to dwell.*

Now the Pious man is he who having right conceptions of God, offers his own perfections as the best HONOUR to the Author of all good, and with a design to beautifie and enrich his Soul, applies himself to him whose nature is to communicate. So that by being qualifi'd to receive good, he HONOURS the giver of it. Whoever thinks to HONOUR God any other way than by himself, makes honour consist in the profusion of his riches,

10 Hierocles upon the Golden Vases

riches, since he does not make an Oblation of his own vertue, but of things without. But alas, what's this? A Sacrifice without a Heart; such a gift as a good man would not accept of. Hear the words of the Oracle again to him, who with an ill disposition of mind sacrificed an whole *Hecatomb*, and then ask'd how acceptable his oblation was.

But I in noble Hermion's Cakes delight.

So that the little frugal Offering was prefer'd before the other's magnificent one, only because 'twas adorn'd with Piety of mind. With this all things find acceptance with God, without it nothing. And so much for Piety and Sanctity.

But whereas the LAW is preserv'd by the constant observation of the ORDER of the Universe, and since the Keeper of this observation was usually call'd among the Ancients by the mystical Name OATH, he deservedly subjoins the precept concerning Swearing, as consequent to what went before.

AND HONOUR AN OATH.

And use an Oath with holy awe.

We have shewn in the preceding discourse

course, that by LAW is understood the power of God as it always acts uniformly, and produces all things in an eternal and unchangeable manner. Next to this LAW we come to discourse of an OATH, which is the cause that keeps all things in the same state, and so establishes them, that the things which are confirmed by the faith of this OATH, and which preserve the order of the LAW, do exist as the sure effect of the *All-producing* Law not in the least transgressing the ORDER of the Creation. For that all things remain in the same LAW whereby they were disposed, must be primarily ascribed to this divine OATH, which among those natures which always contemplate God, is wholly and continually observ'd. But among those which sometimes retain and sometimes lose the divine knowledge, the OATH in like manner is transgress'd by those which apostatize from, and observ'd again by those which return to God.

For the observation of the divine Laws is call'd here an OATH, which unites and knits all those things to God the Author of their beings, which were made to know him. Some of which by
con-

12 Hierocles upon the Golden Verdes

constant adherence to him do always honour this OATH, others by Apostacy sometimes profane it, transgressing the order not only of the divine LAW, but of the divine OATH. Such therefore is this OATH which is interwoven with the natures of Intelligent beings, that they constantly adhere to their Parent and Maker, and never transgress in the least the laws which he has prescribed. As for that OATH which is used in the occurrences of common life, it is but the transcript of this, and serves to direct all those to truth who use it as they shou'd doe. For it reduces the uncertainty of humane counsels to a fixt standard and determinate measure, whether in words or actions. Partly by clearing matters of fact, and partly by securing us in things future. For which cause that OATH which is first in nature, is chiefly to be honour'd as the firmest guard of perpetuity; and that which is of use in the affairs of life, as the image of the other, and that which next to the former secures constancy and truth, and which imbues them with the best manners who have learnt to HONOUR it. Now the honour of an OATH consists only in a free observation what in us lies of the things sworn, whereby those
which

which honour an OATH by a voluntary necessity, are made conformable to the fixt and unalterable standard of the divine habit. And this first and mystical Sanctity of an OATH, is to be repair'd by returning to God, and the breach of it is to be heal'd by purifying vertues. But the sanctity of an humane OATH is upheld by civil vertues. For none but those who are endow'd with them, can swear as they ought in matters of common life, since Wickedness the mother of Perjury affords no foundation for an OATH through the levity and instability of its manners. For how can the Covetous man either in giving or receiving, preserve the sanctity of an OATH? How can an incontinent or timorous man persevere in his resolutions? Will not each of these rather to advantage themselves, throw off the reverence of an OATH, and exchange divine goods for mortal and frail? But those who are thoroughly confirm'd in the habit of vertue, can easily preserve the honour of an OATH. Now the best way to doe this is not to use OATHS frequently, nor inconsiderately, nor upon any ordinary accident, nor as an accomplishment of speech, nor to confirm the truth of a story, but only in things

14 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

things necessary and of good credit, and at such a time too when there appears no other remedy.

We shall find credit with those that hear us, if we use an OATH in such a decent manner, as to put it out of question, that nothing is of greater value to us than truth, whether we swear or not. Neither does this precept of honouring an OATH forbid us Perjury only, but also frequency of Swearing; for if we would be free from Perjury, we must be ware how we abuse OATHS. Since 'tis an easie matter from a common to become a false swearer. On the contrary, the less we use swearing, the more punctual shall we be in the observation of an OATH. For either we shall not swear at all, or when we do, we shall swear well. So that neither our tongue will run before our wit through custom, nor our mind be trepan'd through intemperance of passion. The latter will be govern'd by vertue, and the former by an habitual abstinence from swearing.

Moreover this reverence of an OATH is highly futable to the honour of the Gods before treated of, being the constant attendant and concomitant of Piety. For the OATH was the preserver of the divine

vine Law in the compofure of the Universe. Honour therefore the Law by obeying its commands, and honour an OATH by declining the frequent ufe of it. The way to learn to fwear with due reverence, is to bring your felf to a habit of not fwearing. Which is of the greater importance, becaufe to fwear as we ought, is no fmall part of Piety.

And fo much of the firft kind of Excellencies and the divine Law, which is the Author of Order; together with the OATH conſequent to this Law.

The next Nature which claims our honour is the Angelical, of which he fays

THEN THE ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES,

Then honour Heroes which Mankind excel.

Thefe are the middle fort of Intelligent beings, which are feated next to the Immortal Gods and above the humane nature, and fo as a common term couple the firft and laft together. Thefe as they are next in ftation, fo ought they to be honour'd in the fecond place. And of thefe alfo is the precept of honouring as rank'd by Law to be underftood. For the whole nature of honour confifts in a right
con-

16 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

conception of the person honour'd, where by we may find out what is most suitable to be said or done. For how can a man rightly address himself to a person whom he knows not? And how can he offer them a suitable present of whose worth he is ignorant? The first therefore and true honour of the **ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES** consists in the knowledge of their essence, order, action and perfection. We are to honour no nature which is inferior to our own, but only those beings which have a natural preheminance, and are adorn'd with a constant sublimity of vertue. Now the first and best of all those which naturally excell, is God the great Creator, who is to be honour'd incomparably beyond all. Those of the first rank in the world are they which have a steady and invariable knowledge of him, and represent the divine goodness without the least soil or blemish of passion. These in the Verse are call'd Immortal Gods because they never dye, and never put off the divine likeness. Those are of the middle degree both in nature and honour, which are call'd here **ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES**, having a constant knowledge of their Maker, and shining with him in a happy life, but not uniformly and

un-

unchangeably. Whence they are deservedly call'd **ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES**. **ILLUSTRIOUS** because they are always good and full of light, and never obnoxious to evil or oblivion. And **HEROES** from *Ἔρως* (Loves) or *ἀνέγξις* (lifting up) because they are *Seraphic* lovers of God, and because they sublimates and raise up our minds from the animal to the divine life. Sometimes they are call'd good *Demons*, because of their great knowledge and expertness in the laws of God. Sometimes *Angels*, because they declare and make known to us the rules of a good and happy life. Sometimes we make a threefold division of this middle kind, calling those which constantly inhabit the heavens, *Angels*; those of the earth, *Heroes*; and those which are at equal distance from both, *Demons*; a division frequently used by *Plato*. And some again distinguish this whole middle sort by one of these three names, *Angels*, *Demons* or *Heroes*, for the reasons above mention'd. Here this middle sort is distinguish'd by the Name **ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES**, having the same respect to the first as the light has to the fire, and as the child has to the parent. Hence **HEROES** are stiled the Sons of the Gods, not of a mortal

18 Hierocles upon the golden Verfes

tal ex tract, but originated from their uniform caufe, as light which is concomitant with the fubftance of a lucid body. I mean the pure ferene Ethereal light, after which we confider that which participates of fhades and obfcurity. The third and humane kind bears proportion with this, in as much as 'tis liable to evil and oblivion (for by thefe Man apoftatifies from a perpetual contemplation of God, and in that refpect comes fhort of thofe beings which always contemplate him) and is again reftored to the knowledge of God, when difengaging it felf from material corruption, and fhaking off the mortal paffions, it joins with the divine quire. Then therefore Man deferves to be honour'd by us when he is thought worthy to partake of the Divinity, that what is defective in nature might be made up by the participation of fomething more noble. For it becomes him that loves God, to honour whatever any way refembles him, whether the likenefs be from Eternity, or acquired in time.

And fuch are thofe men which excell others in vertue, concerning whom is the next precept.

HONOUR ALSO THE DEMONS OF THE EARTH DOING RIGHT THINGS.

And Demons of the earth by living well.

By DEMONS here, which signifies Knowing and Learned, he means the souls of Men adorn'd with truth and vertue. And to distinguish them from the DEMONS by nature, such whereof the middle rank consists, he calls them EARTHLY, as apt to dwell and converse upon the Earth, and inform earthy bodies. So that the word DEMON distinguishes them from wicked and unknowing men, and the *Epithet* EARTHLY, from those which constantly contemplate God, and are unapt to converse on earth, or inform mortal bodies. For the appellation of EARTHLY DEMON is applicable to none, but to one that is a Man by nature and a DEMON by habit. The Men therefore whom in the Verse we are commanded to honour, are they which are rank'd among the divine beings, such as resemble *Demons*, *Angels* and *Illustrious Heroes*. For we may not suppose that any thing of a vile and ignoble nature is propos'd to us as an object of our

honour, as the Word may seem to imply. For to give honour to any thing inferior to humane Nature, does by no means become him who either loves God, or is conscious of his own excellence. Nay, we are not to honour Man himself next to ~~the~~ more excellent beings, unless he resemble their perfections, and so make himself one of the divine Quire. But what is the HONOUR due to such? TO DO RIGHT THINGS, he says; that is, to obey the Precepts which they have left us, to esteem their Sentences as authentick as Laws, and to follow the same course of life, the participation of which they were so far from envying us, that they carefully made it their endeavour to preserve the elements of Vertue and rules of Truth in lasting Monuments, as an immortal and fatherly Legacy for the common good of Posterity. To obey these Precepts and live conformably to them, is a more true way of HONOURING them, than to make them sumptuous Oblations and celebrate their obsequies with Magnificence. And thus are we to HONOUR excellent beings, beginning with God the Author of all, leaving the middle place for the Celestial and Ethereal beings, and ending with Man.

And

And since much respect is due to some relations of life, such as that of Parents and Kindred (who although they be not always good, yet have a right to receive honour from us because beneficial to us) therefore he adds

**HONOUR ALSO YOUR PARENTS
AND THOSE WHO ARE NEXT
OF KIN TO YOU.**

*Your Parents next and those of nearest
blood.*

He had in the foregoing Precept commanded us to honour good men as happy and divine beings, and here he commands us to **HONOUR** our **PARENTS** and those that are **NEXT OF KIN** to us, whatever they are, upon the same necessity of Relation. For our **PARENTS** and **NEXT OF KIN** are the same to us in respect of this mortal life, as the Celestial beings our eternal and spiritual Parents, and the Heroes our honourable Kindred. But how are we to **HONOUR** them? Shall we so order our Conversation to their mind as neither to doe nor design any thing but what will please them? But that's the way to become industriously evil, if it be our fortune to have ill PA-

22 Hierocles upon the golden Verfes

RENTS. Or ſhall we ſhew them diſreſpect in all things as a condemnation of their wickedneſs? But how then do we ſatisſie the preſent command? Or how ſhall we avoid being impious againſt God, and the Heroes, if we deny honour to our PARENTS and RELATIVES, who by our own confeſſion reſemble them? So that by this means the denial of HONOUR to our Parents wherein we think we doe vertuoſly, would lead us into a greater evil than what we ſtudy to decline, that of Impiety. On the other ſide, if we conform to our PARENTS in all things, how ſhall we ſecure our Piety and other vertues, if they for want of it themſelves do not direct us to what is good? For if that were altogether true and good which to our PARENTS ſeems ſo, then the HONOUR which we give them would be agreeable to that which we give the more excellent beings. But if at any time the will of our PARENTS thwart the divine Laws, what ſhall thoſe doe who are under this unhappy contradiction of Law, but what is our duty to obſerve in many offices whoſe circumſtances engage us upon contradictory Commands? For this is a practical Maxim, that when two honeſt things offer themſelves

selves to our choice, we ought to prefer the greater before the less if we can't embrace both. For instance, 'tis a good thing to obey God, and 'tis also a good thing to obey our PARENTS. Now if it happen that both these agree in their commands, it is without doubt a most happy thing. But if the divine Law enjoyns one thing and your PARENTS another, in this dissention of wills you must embrace what is best, and in those things only disobey your PARENTS, wherein they disobey the Law of God. For 'tis impossible to resolve obedience to the laws of Vertue, and yet to comply with them who transgress them. But as to all other things we ought to shew our PARENTS all imaginable HONOUR, by submissive and reverent carriage of body, and by ministring to their necessities with all readiness and liberality. For 'tis but reason they should use the service of them, to whom they gave both being and education. But that which no way had any dependance from them, is exempted from their dominion by the Law, to which every one that would truly be a Father, should with all care and industry be conformable. And then 'twill be possible to observe both divine and humane laws together

24 Hierocles upon the golden Verles

ther. And then we need not neglect obedience to our PARENTS upon a pretence of vertue, nor by a foolish compliance make our selves guilty of the greatest of evils, Impiety. For if they threaten to kill or disinherit us for refusing to obey their unjust commands, we must not be affrighted out of our vertue by such Menaces, but remember what part of us that is which is to suffer these things, and that they threaten only that which they begot. As for that part which is incapable of their threats or inflictions, we must be sure to keep that free, and subject only to God. Wherefore we then truly HONOUR our PARENTS, when we keep within the verge of vertue, when we spare neither our bodies nor our purse, but freely devote all to their service. For even our own concerns ought not to call us off from the care of our PARENTS, which we should discharge with the more chearfulness and delight the fuller it is of labour and slavery. Neither ought we to bethink what we spend upon them, but supply their occasions with all chearfulness and willingness, and think it matter of joy to undergo labour and expence for their sakes. He that does this freely and heartily, at once expresse his duty to the laws

laws of vertue, and his gratitude to nature. And this is the HONOUR due to our PARENTS. As for that which is due to our NEXT OF KIN, it must be proportion'd according to the various degrees of Alliance.

THEN AMONG OTHERS MAKE
HIM A FRIEND WHOEVER IS
MOST VERTUOUS.

Then other friends regard as they are good.

After he had stated the honour due to Parents and those of nearest Kin, he proceeds to prescribe a rule of contracting FRIENDSHIP, which is to prefer the most VERTUOUS though no way related to us, and to join with him in the communication of Vertues, that so we may take a good man to be our friend, and upon a good account. So that this Precept is much like that which was given concerning excellent men departed this life. For as there we were commanded to honour Wise men only, so here he exhorts us to contract FRIENDSHIP with none but GOOD men; and though as to our Parents and Kindred he had confined us to discharge the obligations of Nature, yet in dispensing our affections

26 Hierocles upon the Golden Verdes

fections to others, he allows us the liberty of choice. For a Father or a Brother challenges our esteem on a bare personal account, whereas among others 'tis vertue only which recommends and makes honourable, as it does those which are decess'd.

And thus far of the method of contracting FRIENDSHIPS.

But how we are to keep those FRIENDS which are communicative of Good, and to divorce them who degenerate and grow deaf to all good Counsel, comes next to be consider'd.

**YIELD TO MILD WORDS AND
PROFITABLE DEEDS, NEITHER
HATE YOUR FRIEND FOR A
SMALL OFFENCE, AS MUCH AS
YOU CAN, FOR POWER DWELLS
NEAR NECESSITY.**

*Yield to mild words and offices of love,
Do not for little faults your Friend remove.
This is no more than what in you does lye,
For Power dwells hardby Necessity.*

We are inform'd here how we ought to stand affected towards our FRIENDS. The first duty is willingly to give way to them when they give us good Admonitions,

tions, and intend what they doe for our good. For the law of FRIENDSHIP obliges us to this common good, that we mutually promote each other in the advantages of vertue. It becomes those who are fellow-travellers in the ways of Vertue, to be assistant to each other, and if one has a better foresight than the other, to use it for the common interest, and not only to YIELD MILDLY to the good advice of Friends, but to be content that they should share with them in their good things, and never to differ with them about Profit, Honour, or any such temporal interests. For this is for a SMALL OFFENCE to incur the hatred of them who are our friends in matters of greatest concern. We ought therefore upon the account of the strict league of Friendship, to bear with any thing in a friend, except one. For we are not to GIVE WAY to them when they begin to grow worse, neither should we follow them when they quit the road of Vertue, and revolt from the study of Wisdom, to another course of life; but rather ought to use our utmost endeavour by all the arts of perswasion to reclaim them. But if all wont doe, we ought to rest satisfisd, and not provoke them to in-

28 Hierocles upon the Golden Clerkes

indignation for the sake of former intimacy, nor as yet court their friendship by reason of their Apostacy. So that then only the rejection of a friend is warrantable, when we can no longer join with him in the communication of Vertue, for whose sake alone we chose him at first. But we should take heed lest our rejection occasion a hatred. For 'tis our duty, if any one render himself unworthy of our friendship, nevertheless to make it our chiefest care to reduce him into the right way, not to triumph at the fall of our friend, nor to scoff at the meanness of his understanding, but rather to lament and be troubled on his behalf, to further him with our Prayers, and leave no means untried to procure his repentance and welfare. And those are, not to contend with him about Profit, or Honour, not injuriously to debar him our Society; and lastly, not to triumph at his misfortunes. But because to the security of our friendship, to a just desertion and a reconciliation upon repentance, it is highly conducive that we bear Injuries with ease, and deal not too strictly and exactly with our friends in any concern, but endure as much inconvenience as is possible, therefore he adds, **AS MUCH AS YOU CAN.** And

And then lest any should measure the power by the proportion of Will, but by the effort of Nature which the present necessity occasions, he adds that **POWER DWELLS NEAR NECESSITY**. For we find by experience that men are able to outdoe themselves upon a push of necessity. We ought therefore so long to dispense with the faults of a friend, as **NECESSITY** shews it possible, and to make those inconveniences tolerable by the **NECESSITY** of friendship; which at first sight seem'd not to be endured. For we should not bear those things only generously which we are compell'd to undergo, but endure with greater patience whatever conduces to the keeping or recalling of our friends, as the injunctions of a divine **NECESSITY**. Now the **NECESSITY** of reason is more prevalent with those of right judgements, than that which is extrinsecall. Whether therefore you respect that **NECESSITY** which arises from the circumstance of your affairs, or that which is the voluntary result of reason, and agreeable to the divine Laws, you will find the bounds of your power which you are now exhorted to, put forth toward your friends, when you are forbidden to incur their hatred for
small

small offences, setting no value on any thing without the Soul, lest through Covetousness you make an enemy of a friend. But that rather being indifferently affected to such things, you recall your falling friend, and be always conscious of this to your self, that you have done what was in your power, not only to keep those who were your friends, but to reclaim those who degenerated; and that you never gave any occasion of hatred, nor return'd like for like to him that did. For this is the divine law of Friendship, which truly is the most excellent of vertues, and out-shines all the rest in perfection. Friendship is the utmost boundary of Vertue, as Piety is the beginning. Piety is the seed of all good, but the habit of Friendship is the mature fruit of Vertue.

As therefore we must deal justly, not only with them who do so with us, but with them also who endeavour to injure and defraud us, lest by retaliation of injury we become alike criminal, so must we have friendship, that is, Philanthropy and good will towards all who partake of the same nature.

Now the way to observe the measures of Friendship in due order, is principally to embrace good men, who besides the

com-

community of nature retain the perfection of humanity by a good mind; and to love bad men merely for their common nature, since they bring nothing of mind with them to recommend their friendship. Wherefore it is rightly said, that a good man has no enemy, and that a good man only is a friend to himself. Who as he loves the good, so neither does he hate the bad. But when he seeks out for a friend, he chooses only the good man. Imitating God as in other things, so in the measures of friendship, who hates no man, but yet embraces the good with a special and distinguishing favour. For holding forth his good will in common to all mankind, he gives every one his proper share, culling out the good for himself, and reclaiming the revolvers from Vertue by the laws of his justice. For this is a futable and usefull dispensation to both. In like manner 'twill become us to be friendly and kind to all, yet with respect to the merits of each. We should also demean our selves soberly and justly towards all, and not only towards them who are sober and just. Neither should we be good with the good, and wicked with the wicked. For if we so easily change upon occasion, we shall at last have

32 Hierocles upon the Golden Verdes

have no vertue in firm possession. But when once we have acquired an habit of vertue, 'twill not be in the power of him that wills to deprive us of it; neither shall we change our resolutions upon any occurrence, which as we should observe in other vertues, so especially in friendship, that being as was said, the greatest of vertues. Friendship ought to be exercised towards all, but especially toward good men, because it is the love of men, and none deserve the name of Men properly, but those that are good. But to proceed.

LET THESE THINGS BE SO, BUT
ACCUSTOM YOUR SELF TO RE-
STRAIN THESE. YOUR BELLY
FIRST, AND SLEEP, THEN LUST
AND ANGER.

*Do these things so; but these restrain
you must,*

*Your Appetite, your Sleep, Anger and
Lust.*

All these must be curb'd and managed
lest they disturb the Reason. Come on
then, let us rule all our brutish passions
with the bridle of severe discipline, since
they minister occasion of Vice to one
another.

another. For instance, an over-charg'd BELLY causes immoderate SLEEP, both of these produce abundance of Sperm, which exceedingly provokes to VENERY, and pushes on the sensitive Soul to intemperance. Again, ANGER added to this, makes a man ready for any outrage, such as rendezvouzing in Eating and Drinking, duelling for a Miss, and the pursuit of other pleasures to quarrels and brawls. ACCUSTOM YOUR SELF therefore to RESTRAIN THESE, beginning with your BELLY, that the brute inferior part of the Soul may become obedient to the rational, and that you may be able constantly to observe reverence towards your self, honour towards your Parents, and all the other duties you were just now exhorted to. The possibility of performing the former duties, depends upon the performance of this. All those must needs be transgress'd, if the sensitive Faculties be not subjected to the empire of Reason. For either your ANGER will move you against your Parents, or your LUST will make you head-strong against their counsels. Again, either your ANGER will prompt you to Blasphemy, or your desire of gain, to Perjury.

In a word, There is no wickedness

D

which

34 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

which these passions will not betray you into, if Reason does not determin them to what is good. Hence come wars among Relations, treacheries among Friends, and what not? This made a certain person cry out,

*I know what I'm about to doe, is ill,
But Lust and Fury, do o'r power my will.*

For the rational nature being rightly disposed to the sense of what is good, does easily remember its own dignity, and is easily stirr'd up to the discipline of right reason, unless it be born down to Vice by the force of the passions, as with so many leaden weights or plummets. We should know therefore what is becoming, and then so accustom our selves to rule our brutish faculties, that they may quietly and tamely follow the Reason that is within us. The passions being thus order'd, the rational part will be able to observe the foregoing precepts without distraction, concerning which, it is said, **LET THESE THINGS BE SO.** But concerning that which follows, he uses these words, **ACCUSTOM YOUR SELF TO RESTRAIN;** thereby intimating to us, that the rational part is order'd by
disci-

discipline and knowledge, but the irrational by custom and bodily formation, which is the method men take to tame and familiarize wild beasts. The BELLY therefore which is brought to a moderate appetite, will not only retrench the other bodily passions, but will make that of anger more calm and sedate, that we may quietly reason about our duty, not violently agitated by our domestick passions. So may we learn to know what we our selves truly are, and to reverence our selves on that knowledge.

Now this knowledge and this reverence appendent to it, begets an abhorrence of filthy things, for evil things are call'd filthy as being indecent, and unworthy of an Intelligent-being. Concerning which are the following Verses.

COMMIT NO FILTHY THING, NEI-
THER IN ANOTHER'S PRE-
SENCE, NOR IN PRIVATE, BUT
REVERENCE YOUR SELF ABOVE
ALL THINGS.

*From filthy actions at all times forbear,
Whether with others, or alone you are,
And of all things, your self learn to revere.* }

For either when we commit any FIL-
D 2 THY

36 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

THY THING alone, we think that indifferent which we would never have done in the presence of another for the very shame of communication. Or on the contrary, we doe some things with others which we had abstain'd from had we not been emboldened by the communion of Accomplices. For which reason he has cut off both pretences for the commission of evil. For if what is **FILTHY** be really to be avoided, it can never become eligible from any circumstances. Therefore he join'd these two together, **NEITHER IN ANOTHER'S PRESENCE, NOR IN PRIVATE.** So that neither solitude might invite you to any indecency, nor Companions in sin countenance and abet you in the practice of it. Then he adds the reason which is the only preservative against vice, when he says, **REVERENCE YOUR SELF ABOVE ALL THINGS.** For if you have once an habitual reverence of your self, you will have every where a most intimate Guardian whom you will stand in awe of, and from whom you can never withdraw your self. For many when retired from their friends and domesticks, have taken liberty to act such things, which in their presence they would have blush'd to com-

commit. But had they no witness? I omit God (for he is thought to be far off) but had they not themselves, and the testimony of Conscience? They had truly, but they did not consider it, being immers'd wholly in their passions. But such men as these dishonour their reason, and degrade it below a Slave.

Be then an intimate Guardian to your self, and from the consideration of your own privacy, begin your abhorrence of evil. For self-reverence does necessarily beget an avoidance of filthy things, and whatsoever is unworthy of an Intelligent nature.

But now how he that thus abhors Evil should familiarize himself to Vertue, he proceeds to shew.

THEN EXERCISE JUSTICE IN DEED
AND WORD, NEITHER USE YOUR
SELF IN ANY MATTER TO ACT
WITHOUT REASON, BUT KNOW
THAT 'TIS APPOINTED FOR ALL
MEN ONCE TO DYE, AND THAT
RICHES ARE SOMETIMES POS-
SEST, AND SOMETIMES LOST.

*In deed and word, to Justice have an eye,
Do not the least thing unadvisedly,*

38 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

But know that all must to the Shades below,

That Riches sometimes ebb, and sometimes flow.

He that truly reveres himself, will guard himself from falling into any Vice. But of Vices there are several kinds. In the rational part Imprudence, in the irascible Timorousness, in the concupiscible Luxury and Covetousness, and throughout all the faculties Injustice.

To the avoidance therefore of these evils, four sorts of Vertues are necessary. Prudence in the rational part, Courage in the irascible, Temperance in the concupiscible, and lastly Justice, which is conversant about all the faculties, as being the most perfect, and comprising all the other vertues in it self, as parts. For which reason it is first of all mention'd in the Verses. And next Prudence, together with the best designs and undertakings which take their Rise from it, and end in compleat and perfect Justice. For he that uses right reason, has Courage for his fellow-souldier in hardships, Temperance in things pleasant, and in all things Justice. So that in the sum, Prudence will be found to be the beginning
of

of all vertues, Justice the end, and Courage and Temperance the middle. For that faculty which weighs and considers all things, and seeks out that which is right in every action, that all may be rationally disposed, is the habit of Prudence, which is the best disposition of our rational nature, and derives ornament upon the other faculties. So that anger commences Courage, lust Temperance, and Justice swerves nothing from Reason, and with this our mortal Man is adorn'd, but 'tis through the surplusage of Vertue which is in the immortal Man. For the vertues first shine out from the mind upon the rational Soul, of which they are the proper form, perfection and happiness. But upon the brute part and mortal body there shines a reflected ray of Vertue, that what is united to the rational nature, may be replenish'd with beauty and measure. But the chief of all divine good, is Prudence, which when well radicated in the Soul, helps us to advise well in all matters, to bear Death with courage, and the loss of our Goods with mildness and decency. For Prudence is able to bear all the changes of this mortal life and of fortune which is appendent to it soberly and undauntedly. For she considers the na-

ture of things, and knows that what is compounded of Water and Earth, must of necessity be resolv'd into them again. Neither is she exasperated against necessity, or surpris'd at what befalls us, as if 'twere strange and unexpected, or wonders if what is mortal dye. She knows 'TIS APPOINTED FOR ALL MEN ONCE TO DYE, and that there is a certain definite time for the duration of these mortal bodies. Which when come, we should not fret at it, but willingly submit to it as to the law of God. For the office of Prudence is to follow the best counsels, not to seek to escape dying, but to dye well. In like manner she is not ignorant of the nature of Riches, that they sometimes EBB and sometimes FLOW for certain determin'd causes, which to oppose were indiscretion. For we are not the arbitrary possessors of what is not in our power, but neither our bodies nor our riches are in our power, nor in short, whatsoever is without our own rational nature. Neither is it in our power to get or retain when and how long we please. But to acquire and part with them vertuously, this is in our power, and the proper work of the rational nature, if we ACCUSTOM IT TO ACT ACCORDING TO REA-

REASON in all contingencies , and to follow the divine limits which determine all our concerns. And here lies the greatest commendation of our power, that we can use well what is not in our power, and not suffer the vehemency of desire to impeach the freedom of our will. What then is the dictate of a prudent judgment? To make good use of our bodies and estates when we have them, as the instruments of vertue, and when they are taken from us, to know what becomes us, and add patience to our other vertues. So will our piety towards God, and the measures of Justice be kept inviolable, if the rational faculty learn to use things necessary well, and to oppose the bounds of Prudence to events seemingly fortuitous and without order. Otherwise there can be no observation of Vertue if there be not a right judging faculty in the rational nature. For neither will it follow after better things as such, but will act as under compulsion. Neither will it treat the body honourably or manage the estate rightly. Those who are over-carefull to avoid death, and desirous to keep their riches, doe necessarily much injustice, and often blaspheme by wicked execrations against God, and denying his providence

as

42 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

as often as they fall into that which they imprudently declined. By sticking to doe no injury to others, and by endeavouring to scrape together all they can to their own profit. And so the damage of a wrong perswasion is evident in them, whence spring the greatest evils, Injustice against equals, and Impiety against superiors, from which he will be altogether free who being perswaded by the foregoing Verses, bears death generously and with a good judgment, and thinks the loss of riches not intolerable. From this he draws an argument of embracing Justice, when he considers how becoming 'tis to abstain from what is another's, to hurt no body, nor to raise his fortunes upon another's losses. None of all these can he observe who thinks his Soul is mortal, and who never considers what part that is of us which dies, what that is which stands in need of riches, and what that is which exercises Vertue and is advantaged by it. For 'tis the distinguishing of these things which alone prompts us to the exercise of Vertue, and excites us to the pursuit of these excellent things. To which these two Precepts are a most divine motive, **KNOW THY SELF, AND REVERENCE THY SELF.** For
the

the dignity of our nature makes it our duty to consider and ponder the offices of others both **IN DEED AND WORD**. Now Justice is the way to secure the observation of offices, and therefore is set before the other vertues, that it may be the measure of them. For he says **EXERCISE JUSTICE IN DEED AND WORD** ; you will never then blaspheme upon the loss of riches, or in the pains of a disease, lest you should violate Justice in your words. Neither will you invade the goods of your neighbour, or contrive mischief against his person lest you commit Injustice in deed. For if Justice has once the guard of our Souls, we shall discharge our offices to God, to our Neighbour, and to our selves.

Now the best measure of Justice is Prudence, for which reason he join'd these two Precepts together, **EXERCISE JUSTICE, AND USE NOT YOUR SELF IN ANY MATTER TO ACT WITHOUT REASON**, as if Justice could not subsist without Prudence. For that is truly just which perfect Prudence defines. And that is, **TO DOE NOTHING WITHOUT REASON**, but diligently to consider the mortal body and whatsoever conduces to its use and accommodation,

44 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

tion, and taking all things to be inferior to Vertue, to think that the greatest profit consists in the best disposition of the rational soul, which gives ornament to all other things according to their Capacity. And this is the Scope of the verses before us, to set forth and deliver to the Auditors the four Cardinal virtues, with the watchfull observation and care where-with they are to be exercised both in deed and word. For he exhorts to Prudence, Fortitude and Temperance, but above all he recommends Justice to our practice, as a transcendent vertue which runs throughout all the rest. And whereas he adds that **RICHS SOMETIMES ARE POSSEST AND SOMETIMES LOST**, he signifies, that after the disposition of Temperance, comes that of Liberality, which is a vertue conversant about giving and receiving money. For then only to possess or quit possession when reason requires, takes away all occasion of sordidness and prodigality. But all this flows as from a fountain or principle from that one precept, of reverencing ones self. Nay and this very precept was anticipated too in that other, know your self, which must be the ground-work of all gallant actions and speculative notices of things.

For

For how do we come to know that 'tis our duty to moderate our passions and to know the things that are? For there is much doubt concerning these things; First, whether they be within the verge of humane attainment? and secondly, whether they will profit those who have them? Again, a good man may be so low in the World that he cannot receive unjustly when he ought not, or spend justly when he ought. And as to his body he lies most open to all assaults, since he neither affects Empire himself nor knows how servilely to flatter those who have it. So that unless there were some other nature in us advantaged by Vertue, we should scarce ever refuse riches or power. Wherefore those who think the Soul mortal, and yet dispute about the love of vertues, cavil rather than offer any thing of truth. For if something of us did not subsist after death, whose nature is capable to be adorn'd with truth and vertue (such as we affirm the rational soul to be) we should never have a pure desire of excellent things. For the very suspicion of the Souls mortality extinguishes all desires of vertue, and turns them all to bodily enjoyments, whatever they are or however obtain'd. For
how

46 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

how upon their principles can it seem the part of a prudent or moderate man not to indulge and gratifie the Body altogether, for whose sake the Soul is preserv'd in its subsistence, since according to them it has no self-existence, but is the result of a certain conformation of the body? How again shall he be content to put off the body for the sake of Vertue if at the same time he shall destroy his soul too, so that Vertue it self will have no where to exist, for whose sake he underwent death? But as to this, divine Men have abundantly demonstrated that the Soul is immortal, and naturally apt to be adorn'd with Vertue.

But now putting an end to the present disputation, we will proceed to what follows, adding this only to what has been said, That as from the ignorance of our nature all manner of wickedness flows in upon us, so if we know our selves and disdain whatever does not become our rational nature, we shall truly and constantly perform all our offices. And this is the measure of every particular vertue. For if we attend to our nature as to a rule, we shall find that which is decent in all things, living according to right reason and agreeably to nature. For whatsoever makes

makes the soul better, that is truly Virtue, and the law of Philosophy. But those things which tend only to humane decency and shew, are servile fallacies and mere umbrages of virtue, which hunt after popular applause, and whose utmost care is to appear vertuous to the World. And so much of this.

Moreover from this right consideration of things, it follows necessarily that we **DEMEAN OUR SELVES NOT WITHOUT REASON** in those concerns of life which seem to come to pass without order, but that upon examination of their causes we bear them generously, never finding fault with those who have the charge of us, who distributing to every one according to merit, did not reward all alike whose proficiency was unequal. For how, since the World is ruled by Providence, and the Soul is by nature incorruptible, but by the will is carried forth to virtue and vice, can those whose office is to defend the Law and consider Merit, distribute equally to those who are unequal? and not rather distribute to every one his convenient lot, which a man is said to draw when he comes into the World? If therefore the being of Providence distributing to every one

48 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

one what is fit, and the immortality of the Soul be no Fable, 'tis plain that the cause of our grievances ought to be transfer'd from our Governour upon our selves, from which consideration the Verse will shew us a way to remedy our disasters. For when we find that the cause of all this inequality is in our selves, we first alleviate the grievousness of Events by right reasoning, and then exciting our Souls by holy methods and right perswasions to what is more excellent, we shall wholly free our selves from trouble. But when the afflicted man neither perceives the cause, nor conjectures at a like event he will **ACCUSTOM HIMSELF TO ACT WITHOUT REASON**, which is the thing here forbidden. For 'tis necessary that he who seeks not into the true causes, should transfer the fault upon the Superior nature, and either say there is no Providence, or that our affairs are not well administred by it. But such opinions as these do not only aggravate the crimes of our life past, but excite the mind to all wickedness and deprive it of liberty of will, in that they make it ignorant of the causes of the present evils. But that you may know how we ought to think of these things, hear the Verses.

MORE.

MOREOVER WHATSOEVER EVILS
MEN UNDERGO BY DIVINE FOR-
TUNE, BEAR YOUR PART MILD-
LY, NEITHER FRET AT IT. BUT
YOU SHOULD CURE IT WHAT
YOU CAN, YET CONSIDER THIS,
THAT FATE DOES NOT DISTRI-
BUTE MUCH OF THIS TO GOOD
MEN.

*Bear patiently what ill by Heaven is
sent,*

*And add not to your Grievs by discon-
tent.*

*Tet rid them if you can; But know
withall,*

*Few of these Thunder-storms on good
men fall.*

Before we begin our Explication, we
must premise, that by EVILS here, is
meant, whatsoever makes the way of
life laborious and troublesome, as Sicknes,
Poverty, loss of Friends, Reproach, and
the like. For these are grievances not
easie to be born in life, but not really
EVIL or pernicious to the Soul, unless
from them we take occasion to sin,
which we may doe also in good things
if we don't use them rightly, as Health,
E Riches,

Riches and Power. For we may doe ill with these, and obtain Vertue with the contrary. But real EVILS are voluntary offences, such as are inconsistent with Vertue; and these are Injustice, Intemperance, and whatever else is contrary to that which is excellent. For none of all these can be said to be done well; as thus, such a man does Injustice well, or Riots well; as we may say of external Evils, that a man labours under Sicknes or Poverty well as often as he bears such things according to right reason. But the word *well* is not used in the diseases of the Soul, because they are deviations from and detriments to right reason, whose dictates the soul of Man disregards, though engraven and implanted naturally on it, when blinded with passion. That right reason is implanted in Men this is a sure sign, that an unjust man gives a right judgment in those things wherein his interest is not concern'd, and so an intemperate man reads lectures of Temperance to others: In a word, every wicked man uses right counsels in those things wherein he is not byass'd aside by his passions. So that a wicked man may turn vertuous by a retracting his former wickedness. Neither to this end is it
 neces-

necessary that wrong reason should be in us that this might be the principle of Vice as the other is of Vertue. For right reason alone, like the Law of the land, is a sufficient standard whereby to define what is done according to it and what against it, and to approve of the one and restrain the other. Neither is there any need of any principle of Evil whether internal or external. But there is great need of a principle of Good, and of that only; and that again is either separate from the rational nature, which is God, or lodg'd and enthron'd within us, which is right reason. And after this manner are EVILS distinguish'd. Among which he does not say that those which are voluntary are distributed to men by the DIVINE FORTUNE, but only those which are necessary, and are not now in our power, but which follow our heretofore voluntary and avoidable offences, which are grievous as we said, but capable of receiving ornament from Vertue. For Poverty is adorn'd by a moderate diet, and meanness of extract is rais'd by prudence. So the loss of Children commends the good man's patience and meekness, who is able to say, *My Son is dead, is he not then render'd back again?* and I

52 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

knew I begat a Mortal. And in like manner all other things varnish'd over with the beauty of Vertue, become more gracefull.

Now we come to enquire what are those DIVINE FORTUNES whereby men undergo outward calamities. If by the divine sentence Riches were allotted to one, and Poverty to another antecedently and absolutely, this should be call'd the divine Will, and not the DIVINE FORTUNE. If again nothing presiding be signifi'd by this Phrase, but it happen by chance that one man is happy and another unhappy, then it should be call'd only FORTUNE without the Epithet DIVINE. But if God the supreme Arbiter distribute to every one according to his deserts, and is not the cause of our being such or such, but for this end only is arm'd with Justice, that he might make equal retributions according to its laws, then the manifestations of his judgments are deservedly call'd DIVINE FORTUNES, thereby intimating to us, that God has no absolute antecedent purpose to punish one and honour another, but only as he behaves himself, so or so, and that the cause of this is not to be sought for out of our selves. So
that

that the connexion of our Election and his judgment, makes a DIVINE FORTUNE.

All therefore that is meant by DIVINE FORTUNE, is nothing else but the judgment of God against Sin. And so the artificial contrivance of this Phrase saves God's providence, and the Soul's liberty and immortality. So that the matters of our life come not to pass altogether by fate, nor yet at random and fortuitously, nor is our whole life to be resolv'd one way. But whenever we offend in things within our power, 'tis to be referr'd to our own choice, but whatsoever follows our sins according to the laws of Justice, that is our FATE; and whatever good proceeds primarily from God, is to be referr'd to Providence. But we should ascribe nothing of the things that are to a fortuitous and temerarious cause, no nor any thing that is done, unless from the event and connexion of those things which Providence, Fate and humane Will work antecedently, something follow the first efficient causes which may be call'd fortuitous.

For example, 'Tis the will of the Judge to punish a Murtherer, and not this particular man as such; and yet he punishes

this man whom he would not, because he has assumed to himself the place and condition of a Murtherer. Now the antecedent and absolute will of the Judge is to punish a Murtherer, but 'tis through accident that he wills the punishment of this man, because he voluntarily assumed the person of a Murtherer.

Again, 'twas the will of a wicked man to commit Murther, but not to suffer punishment on that account. This antecedent purpose of committing Murther, was dependent upon the liberty of his will, but then torments and punishment follow by accident.

Now of these the Law is the cause, which suggests to the Judge a will of punishing evil men in general, and this Murtherer in particular. The same I consider in the divine Nature, when the will of Man determines to doe evil, and when the will of the Judge who is the defender of the Law, is wholly bent to animadvert upon the violations of it, from this concurrence arises a DIVINE FORTUNE, through which he that does such things is accounted worthy of such punishments. The first refers the cause of judgment to the liberty of the will, which prefer'd evil, the last to the reason
of

of legal discipline, which follows the quality of the offence.

Now the Law reconciles both these, which takes care that all may be well as far as it can, and nothing amiss. For that pre-existing in the divine goodness will not suffer the evil to go unpunish'd lest a continued and Chronical wickedness induce an oblivion of all good, whose necessary remembrance is kept alive by the justice of those who have the charge of the Laws.

The Law therefore joyns together (as 'twas said) those whose part is to judge, and those who are to be punish'd, that it may work out a peculiar good from both. For if it be more advantageous to suffer punishment than not, and if Justice inflicts some hurt, to correct and retrench the luxuriancy of evil, it is plain that the Law, that it may both help and be help'd, does set the Judge over the Offender to preserve it self, and deliver the Offender to the Judge to animadvert upon him according to his desert, that by his sufferings he may be brought to the remembrance and consideration of the Law. For that very law which men deny in *doing* ill, they desire when they *suffer* ill.

56 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

For example, he that does an injury wishes there were no God, that he might not suffer the punishment which hangs over his head, but when the same man is injur'd himself, he wishes there were one to redress his injury. 'Tis fit therefore that they who doe injury should feel the evil of it themselves, so that what they did not see in the commission, being besott'd and blinded with Covetousness, they may learn by the discipline of Suffering, provided they suffer well. But if they stubbornly persist still in their wickedness, perhaps they themselves reap less advantage, yet without doubt their example will be a lesson of Instruction to the wise, who consider the cause of their sufferings. Now the most proper principles of judgment we take to be these, the goodness of God, the Law proceeding from it, and the inherent law of right-reason which is transgress'd, and though a domestick God, impiously affronted. But the event of this judgment are those grievances which render our life unpleasant through bodily pains. These we are commanded by the Verse to BEAR MEEKLY by looking into their causes, to prevent them what we can, and to turn to our advantage
what

what seems hurtfull. And above all by the most exalted vertue to render our selves worthy to partake of the divine good. But if any one be not yet ripe for that, yet let him at least attain to civil good by the help of middle vertue. For this is that whereby he exhorted us to BEAR AFFLICTIONS MILDLY and generouſly, and to CURE our ſelves of them.

What other remedy can there be beſides what has been ſaid, by which the grief of Sufferings may appear conſonant to Reaſon, and a method of Cure be found out? The ſum of all is this, God the Law-giver and Judge, countenances what is good, and takes away what is evil; ſo that he is wholly free from the imputation of Sin. But thoſe who are voluntarily wicked and forget right reaſon which is implanted in them, he puniſhes as evil, according to the purport of the Law, which forbids all evil, and as men, by reaſon of the connexion of their wills and the laws which we call FORTUNE. For the Law does not puniſh Man ſimply, as Man, but as Evil. Now the primary cauſe of his being Evil was his own will. But ſince his being Evil (the cauſe of which was in himſelf, and not in God) he ſuffers puniſhment, (which is in the divine will,
and

58 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

and not in his own.) The only scope of the Law is that which is worthy of God and profitable to Men, to extirpate and purge away wickedness by the various discipline of Justice, and to pluck back the Soul just rushing into debauchery to the remembrance of right reason.

Since therefore this is the settled constitution of the Law, the same retribution cannot be made to all. For that wou'd neither be equitable in it self, nor profitable to us. The difference of the matter under judgment, should give a difference in sentence. For how can he be thought worthy of the same with another, who is not like him? The DIVINE FORTUNE is therefore to be BORN MEEKLY, neither ought he to take it hainously, who suffers punishment, and is purg'd as much as God thinks fit from those things which seem to clog the pleasure of life. Such reasoning as this would cure us of our former offences, and convert us to our right reason for the future. For how can it be, but that he, who knows misery to be the fruit of Vice, avoid the path which leads thither? Besides, if it be at all convenient to be angry under afflictions, he will think it more reasonable to be angry with himself, than with
God,

God, who puts a stop to his wickedness by the instruments of Justice, whereby he may be brought to the knowledge and remembrance of the divine Laws; so that 'twill be his own fault if he fall into calamity. For afflictions are not distributed to men by chance if there be a God over us, and bounds of Justice proportioning every man's lot to his merit. Wherefore 'tis a true saying, that CALAMITIES FALL NOT MUCH UPON GOOD MEN. For first they will bear them patiently, as the good pleasure of Heaven, and then through the help of their vertues which alleviate the most poignant calamities. Besides, there is good hopes that the residue of our life shall not be troubled with such accidents, since divine good is laid up for those who rise up to the highest degree of Vertue, and humane good for those of the middle order. Besides, our afflictions will be healed if by patience we learn the method of Cure. For how can they supplicate God in a manner becoming his Majesty, who deny his Providence and Justice to be exercised about humane affairs, and that our immortal Soul has a share in those outward things, as by her own voluntary motions she renders her self worthy? For whence
he

60 Hierocles upon the Golden Curses

he will find occasion to bear this present fortune patiently, that does not refer it to these things, is not to be imagin'd? much less how he should cure it. For he cannot rest contented in afflictions as things indifferent, or better than the contrary, for in themselves consider'd they are to be avoided as full of grief and trouble. Our nature does not affect such things as desirable for themselves, unless some good be expected to accrue to us from the suffering of evil. There is a necessity therefore of Impatience and Uneasiness, and that our misery be augmented from the ignorance of our selves, and yet that we suffer punishment nevertheless; but our greatest wickedness will be to think the world destitute of, or ill administer'd by Providence. For this comes all to one, to think there is no God, or if there be, that he exercises no Providence; or if he does, yet that 'tis such a one as removes from him all goodness and justice. Which is an opinion full of all manner of Impiety, and which drives into all wickedness those who suffer themselves to be led by such doctrines. For as Piety is the mother of all Vertue, so a defection from that is the highway to all Wickedness. He only therefore will find out a cure for his Calami-

lamities, who has learnt to BEAR THEM PATIENTLY. And this is to be done only by Philosophy, which exactly knows the natures of things, and their consequent operations, whose series and order is the administration of all things, from which necessarily arises the DIVINE FORTUNE or FATE. Which (as we have said) is nothing else but the retribution given to every one according to his deserts, which depends upon God's providence, the good order of the World, and the will of Man. For if there were no divine Providence, there would not be that order in the World which one may call FATE, and if none of the other, there would be no mulct or judgment against the wicked, no nor any reward or commendation for the good. But upon the supposition of Providence and Order, it was fit that all men should be born to the same good, provided they had done nothing to discriminate themselves. But 'tis plain they are not equally dealt withall, it is therefore as plain that the inequality of our will, which is subjected to the judgment of Providence, was the cause of the unequal distribution, since 'tis necessary that the lot fall according to desert. But let us not be troubled that

we

62 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

we see the same inequality in Brutes, Plants, and inanimate things, as in Men; for it does not follow that no Providence presides over our concerns, because things happen fortuitously with them, or if in them also there is punishment and judgment, and the consideration of Vertue and Vice, since there is so much exactness in our concerns.

For first, inanimate things are as common matter to Plants, Animals and Men, and then some Animals are common food for others, and for Men. So that they doe the same to one another, not with any regard to the merit of them that suffer, but either to satisfie their own hunger, or to cure a disease; in a word, to relieve their necessities which way soever they can. So that the infelicity of Brutes is occasion'd by the supply of our needs, and their seeming happiness depends upon our favour. If it be therefore urged by any that there may be some beings more excellent than our selves, which may abuse us to supply their wants, as we seem to use Brutes to supply ours, it must be confess'd that they are mortal, and made appear that the bodies of Men are spent upon their use. But if nothing superiour to Man be mortal (since he himself is the lowest of
all

all Intelligent-beings, and for this reason came of necessity into a mortal body, though immortal, and taking an organ of affinity with Brutes, converſes here upon earth) there can be no being which may abuſe our miſeries to its own luxury; nay, nothing which may uſe us to gratifie an inordinate humour.

Justice therefore and Order preſcribe rules of adminiſtration to that God which preſides over us. So that he can doe nothing concerning us, but what tends to the leſſening of our wickedneſs, and the bringing us back to himſelf. For he is concern'd for us as often as we fall, as for thoſe which are near of Kin to him. So that 'tis rightly ſaid that men only are apt to be reclaim'd by modeſty, puniſhment and diſgrace. For a rational Creature only has a ſenſe of Juſtice. We therefore who are at ſo great a remove from the nature of brutes, ſhould have a far diſtant way of adminiſtration. For the law of Providence agreeable to the nature of the Univerſe, and in the ſame order as every thing had its ſubſiſtence from God, ſo it partakes of his providence.

Now all the Souls of men ſeem to be produced by God himſelf particularly, whereas of Brutes he produced only the kinds,

64 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

kinds, committing them over to the *Plastic* vertue of Nature, according to *Plato* and *Timæus* the *Pythagorean*, who will have nothing mortal to be the immediate production of God, and that the souls of Men are made of the same temperament with the Mundane gods, *Demons* and Illustrious *Heroes*; and therefore that Providence is conspicuous in every man after what manner he is distant from them there, after what manner he aspires to them, after what manner he lives here, and after what manner he departs hence thither. None of all which is to be done concerning an irrational nature. For neither can that come to God which is not to be wrought on by moral persuasions; neither can that converse upon earth which is naturally an heavenly plant, neither is it apt to be translated into its proper Orb.

And so much by way of *Apology* to Malecontents, who endeavour to undermine the being of Providence; to whom this is fit to be said over and above, that the greatest argument of a rational and considering frame of mind, is to **ENDURE AFFLICTIONS PATIENTLY**, which not only alleviates the present misery, but prevents future trouble. But what do

doe you by Impatience but add Impiety, the greatest of evils, to your other labours, and render your grief more pungent by thinking, that you suffer undeservedly? Will not he that is sick be much more so if he vexes and pines at his sickness? We should not therefore fret at the recompense of our deserts, lest by our ill deportment under the present Calamity we contract a habit of a worse.

And this also is worth considering, that if any one who is fallen into Poverty, BEAR IT MEEKLY, besides the abatement of his grief by it, he shall find some other solace and relief. Partly because his own discretion being not disturb'd with grief, will be the more able and expedite to procure him convenient maintenance, and partly because his neighbours admiring his prudence and courage, will supply him as far as they can, with things necessary to life; whereas the impatient and womanly peevish man in the first place contributes to his own misery, and then being bound up, and as it were benum'd with grief for his poverty, he becomes altogether unapt either to help himself, or to be reliev'd by the contributions of his neighbours; and if any throw him something by way of alms, that aggravates

F

his

66 Hierocles upon the golden Verses
his discontent as an exprobration of his
poverty.

From what has been said it appears,
that 'tis our interest as well as duty, to
BEAR all ill events PATIENTLY, ascri-
bing the cause of them to the perverseness
and obliquity of our own minds, and con-
sidering withall, that since there is a Pro-
vidence, he that is now good cannot be
neglected, whatever old marks he bears of
the divine displeasure. For the very ac-
quist of vertue carries with it an abate-
ment of affliction, but by the care of
Providence an utter riddance and delivery
from it. For 'twas our own wickedness
and the divine judgment consequent up-
on it, which brought upon us our Ca-
lamities, which again in like manner
are remov'd by our amendment and the
law of Providence, which frees them
from evil, who give themselves up to
what is good. Such weighty Precepts
do these Verses afford us, which conduce
to ground us in the first rudiments of
Vertue. For they seem to contain the
most true measures of Providence, Fate,
and liberty of Will, whereby this discourse
has rectifi'd the trouble arising from the
seeming inequality of things, and has de-
monstrated throughout, that God is no
way

way the cause of Evil. Which if you join with what went before, the result of the whole discourse will be one entire confirmation of the Eternity of the Soul. For his exhorting to the exercise of Justice, to courage in Death, and to a liberal use of Riches, serves to shew that the Soul does not dye with the Body, But it seems also requisite to our enduring the DIVINE FORTUNE, and our being able to cure our selves, that the Soul be not generated with the Body; as to that, 'tis apparent from both that the Soul is above generation and corruption, of a distinct nature from the body, and in its own nature Eternal. For 'tis as impossible that should last for ever whose production was dated from some time, as that that should be capable of Corruption which subsisted from Eternity. If therefore after the dissolution of the body, the surviving Soul of man is obnoxious to punishment and judgment, and receives just retributions according to the things done in the body; and if lastly that cannot always remain which began in some time, it is evident that the Soul did exist before all time. And thus the Soul of man is found among the eternal Works of God, and in this respect also partakes of the divine likeness.

But because we have insisted sufficiently on this, 'tis high time to consider what follows.

MANY GOOD AND BAD DISCOURSES PROCEED FROM MEN, WHICH NEITHER ADMIRE OVERMUCH, NOR YET UTTERLY DISDAIN. BUT IF ANY SPEAK UNTRUTH GIVE WAY WITH MILDNESS.

*Oft good and ill do in discourse unite,
Be not too apt t'admire, nor yet to slight.
But if through error any speak amiss,
Endure't with mildness——*

The will of man not being always set either upon good or evil begets discourse favouring of both in conformity to its contrary affections, whence it comes to pass that some discourses are true, some good, some bad and some false. Which variety requires discretion of judgment; that we may chuse the good and refuse the bad, so that we be neither prejudic'd against all discourse by condemning the bad, nor swallow down any thing without distinction out of greediness after what is good. For by prejudice we often deprive our selves of the benefit of good, and by too great

great eagerness of hearing, we suck in the hidden poyson of evil discourses. We must therefore use our appetite of hearing with the best discretion, that so our desire may bring us to hear all, but our discretion may refuse what is not good. So shall we keep the *Pythagorick* Precept, neither too vehemently moved at bad discourses, nor taking in all without distinction, because discourses. Nor on the same account abstaining from good ones. For we do not embrace the good because discourses, but because true, nor condemn the bad for any other reason than because false. Nay, I may confidently affirm that none are to be reckon'd among discourses but what are true. For they only retain the dignity of the rational nature, being the off-spring of a mind disposed to what is best, and in possession of its proper ornament. But false discourses are indeed no discourses at all. For since they lead into Vice and Error, they not only degenerate from the ingenuoufness of discourse, but are the voice of a Soul divested of Reason and immerc'd in Passion. You're advis'd therefore, not to take in all, lest you swallow that which is false, nor to reject all, lest you reject the good too. For 'tis absurd both ways, to hate

the good with the evil, and to embrace falshood for the sake of truth. But we ought to commend the good, and upon admission to reduce it into practice, and to examin where and how far it is consonant to truth. But against the false, to contend with force of argument, which is supplied from the rules deliver'd in *Logic* for the discerning of truth; and when we can overthrow what is false, not to doe it with violence and rudeness, but to follow the truth with mildness, with decent reprehensions to confute falshood and in the words of the Verse, to **GIVE WAY WITH MILDNESS**; by which we are not commanded to yield the Cause (as they say) but to hear without Passion. For when he bids us **GIVE WAY TO FALSHOOD WITH MILDNESS**, he does not mean that we should embrace it, but only give it a patient hearing, and not to count it such a strange thing if men fall off sometimes from truth. For humane nature lies open to a multitude of erroneous opinions when it does not closely adhere to its common Notices. 'Tis no wonder therefore (says the Verse) if a man never imbued with the principles of truth, nor of any experience, assert opinions contrary to truth. Nay on the
con-

contrary, 'twou'd be a wonder if a man who is both untaught and unpractis'd in dispute; should stumble on truth by chance, we should therefore hear those that err with allowance, and learn by their defects what evils we our selves are free from, who being by the community of nature subject to the same passions, are yet privileg'd from them by the *Preservative* of knowledge. Besides, the very courage and confidingness of knowledge, conduces much to mildness. For the mind which comes sufficiently provided to engage in the defence of truth, can calmly stand the shock of false opinions, having preconceiv'd in the consideration of truth whatever might be alledg'd against it. What can disturb such a man as unanswerable? His very confidence will suggest thoughts to him for the confutation of error. The knowing man therefore, will learn quietness and sedateness, not only from his morality, but from his very confidence.

And so much for that Prudence which is to be used in distinguishing Discourses.

Next comes the habit of declining Deceit (necessary to a wise man) to be treated of.

BUT OBSERVE WHAT I TELL YOU
IN EVERY THING; LET NO
MAN INTICE YOU EITHER BY
WORDS OR DEEDS, TO DOE OR
SAY ANY THING WHICH IS NOT
PROFITABLE TO YOU.

————— *But be sure of this
That none by word or action you intice
To doe, or speak to your own prejudice.*

*This Precept is of general extent, and is
equivalent with another before mention'd,
in these words.*

*From filthy actions at all times forbear, }
Whether with others, or alone you are; }
And of all things, your self learn to revere. }*

For he who has learnt to stand in awe
of himself, and dares not commit any fil-
thy action either in solitude, or in com-
pany; nay, and affords not the least en-
tertainment to any such thing even in his
very imagination, out of reverence to the
guardian reason which is within, this man
is he, who is able to hear this, LET
NONE DECEIVE YOU EITHER BY
WORD OR ACTION. For he only is
above all Imposture and Fallacy, who
know-

knowing that he has the dignity of a man, suffers himself neither to be wheedled with flattery, nor dejected with threats, whether he has to deal with friends or enemies.

Now the ways of DECEPTION are either by words or actions. The former consists in Flatteries and Threatnings, the latter in setting before us Bribes and Punishments.

Against all these we should have our minds fortifi'd with right reason, that we be neither charm'd nor enslav'd either by Pleasure or Pain, which on all sides assault our Constancy. For when right reason, which is within, has set on both sides those two invincible keepers, Temperance and Fortitude, to guard the Soul, it will secure us from being DECEIV'D either by the smooth insinuations of things pleasing, or the dread of things terrible, which even temper of mind is accompany'd with that exact justice which we were above exhorted to exercise in Deed and Word. By this means, none will be ever able to perswade us to let fall a word, or commit an action that is not consonant to right reason. For 'tis manifest that if we stand most in awe of our selves, none will appear to us more venerable or more dreadfull than our selves,

selves, that we should be induced to speak or doe any thing besides our duty. For both are prejudicial to the mind, and what is hurtfull to that can never be for our advantage, since our minds are properly we our selves. This therefore is to be diligently heeded, **WHICH IS NOT PROFITABLE TO YOU.** Where the first word is to be refer'd to what you properly are. If then this be the thing enjoin'd, that none deceive you by Word or Deed, to doe or speak what will not be for your Profit, and if by **YOU**, is understood the reasonable Soul, you will not let any one (if you're wise) injure your rational nature, which is your self. For 'tis your Soul which is **YOU**, this which you see is but your body. Thus distinguishing, you will prevent confusion of natures, and find out wherein humane nature truly consists, if you take neither your body nor the things without for your own, and if you never contend on their account as for your self, lest you be drawn to the love of your body or of riches. For when we know not what we our selves are, we shall be also ignorant of that which we care for, and shall be apt to be concern'd for any thing rather than our selves, whom we should make

our

our chiefeſt care. For if that which uſes the body is the Soul, and the body ſerves only as an inſtrument for that, and if other things are invented to help the frail nature of this inſtrument, it is apparent that what is firſt and principal ſhould be firſt and principally cared for, and the ſecond only in ſubordination to the firſt. For this reaſon a wiſe man will not be negligent of his health, not out of a principal regard to his body, but that he may accommodate it to the uſe of his mind, and render it apt to obey its operations with all readineſs and expediteneſs. And in the laſt place, he will take care of the laſt, ordering the things that are without to the welfare of the inſtrument. 'Tis the Soul therefore which is his chief, and perhaps only care, ſince the care of things ſubordinate to it tends to its advantage.

Now every thing which is contrary to vertue comes under the notion of **WHAT IS NOT PROFITABLE TO YOU.** For to whom Vertue is profitable, to him what is contrary to Vertue will be unprofitable. He counſels you therefore to ſummon together all the aids of Vertue, when he enjoyns you not to give ear to him that endeavours to ſeduce you from your integrity by whatever methods he tries to doe it.

For

For example, not if a Tyrant allure you with promises, or confirm them in reality, not if he terrifies you with threats, or offers violence by tortures; not if he hide his fraud under the mask of Courtisie, let him seduce your Soul from **WHAT IS PROFITABLE**.

Now the only things that are profitable to it, are Truth and Vertue. You shall therefore be out of the reach of all **FRAUD**, if knowing your own essence, both what it is, and what it naturally resembles, you have always a special care of the image which it bears: and if you look upon whatsoever perverts you from this likeness, as the greatest damage you are capable of. For this is the very thing **WHICH IS NOT PROFITABLE TO YOU**, which seduces you from the likeness of God. And since that is most for our interest whatsoever promotes this likeness, I would fain know what any one can offer to us of such moment or value, that we should quit our desire of being like God for its sake? Is it the giving of riches? or is it the taking them away? But alas, these we have learnt to desire or refuse as right reason shall dictate to us. Neither are we ignorant of the uncertainty of their possession. What if they escape

cape the hands of the Thief, how many other ways are there of losing them? To which we will add one more, which is, to exchange riches for a voluntary poverty joyn'd with honesty, quitting them for a good cause, and redeeming our Vertue at as great a rate, as he would doe us harm who endeavours to spoil us of it. But he will set before us torments and death. This is easily answer'd. 'Tis not *we* which shall suffer these things, if we preserve what is our own; but 'tis the Body only which suffers all the injury. The Body, which by dying, suffers nothing contrary to its nature. For it is by nature subject to death, section, and infinite other injuries, which every disease can inflict more than a Tyrant.

Why therefore do we so much bestir our selves, to fly those things which we cannot avoid? why rather don't we preserve that which is in our power, to keep inviolable? what by nature is mortal, can by no art be exempted from appointed death, but what we have immortal (which is our Soul, our selves) we can adorn with Vertue, if we faint not at the threats of death, which when we undergo on a just account, we may make a Vertue of the necessity of Nature by a
right

78 Hierocles upon the Golden Verles

right election. Theſe are the great things which one man can inflict upon another. But the inner reſeſſes of the Soul are ſubject to none, but free, if we our ſelves will, if we do not out of an inordinate paſſion for the body and things without, enſlave our liberty, ſelling the good of our ſouls for a Momentary life and riches.

Theſe are the things which the Precept under conſideration commands us always to obſerve, by which the ſtability and conſtancy of Vertue is ſeal'd up and confirm'd.

Let us now proceed to other Precepts of the ſame import.

ADVISE BEFORE ACTION THAT
NO FOLLY INSUE; HE IS A MI-
SERABLE MAN THAT DOES OR
SPEAKS WHAT IS INCONSID-
RATE. THAT DOE WHICH WILL
NOT TROUBLE YOU AFTER-
WARDS.

*Think before action, Folly to prevent, (ment,
Raſh words and acts, are their own puniſh-
That doe, which done, after you'll ne'r repent.)*

Prudence of Counſel brings forth Ver-
tues, perfects them and preſerves them,
being

being at once their Parent, Nurse and Guardian. For when we calmly deliberate after what manner we should live, then we chuse the beauty of Vertue. And when upon deliberation we resolve generously to encounter all Agonies on the account of Vertue, and accustom our selves to the possession of it, wee keep our minds uncorrupt in all the storms of Calamity, not at all startled or dismay'd by tumults from without, so as to change our purpose, or think any course of life happy besides that which we once concluded best for its self. So that there are three offices of good counsel. 1. The election of the best life. 2. The exercise of that which we have chosen. 3. A constant observation of what is once well resolv'd.

The first of these is that reason which goes before action, and is the principle of acting.

The middle is the reason with the action, which accommodates every thing that is done to the preceding principles.

The third is the reason in the action, which examines all that is done, and judges of its right performance.

But the excellency of good Counsel shines throughout, partly by bringing forth vertues, partly by nourishing, and partly

80 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

partly by preserving and guarding them.

So that in this consists the beginning, middle and end of our Vertues, by this alone our ills are remov'd and our vertues perfected. For our nature being rational, and consequently capable of deliberation, when by its own will it is led either to good or bad Counsels, then the life which is according to nature preserves its essence, but an election of Evil corrupts it as far as 'tis possible. The corruption of an immortal being is Vice, the Parent of which is want of Counsel, which the Verse exhorts you to avoid, **THAT** so **FOLLY** MAY NOT **IN-SUE**. Now **FOLLY** is all one with **Misery** and **Vice**. For **HE IS A MISERABLE MAN THAT SPEAKS OR DOES INCONSIDERATELY**. But if you deliberate before you act, you will never be guilty of any foolish word or action, which they must needs be involv'd in who are guilty of unadvisedness. For Repentance argues the weakness of Election, when Experience only convinces of the damage, as good Counsel produces a firm election, shewing the profitableness of the action.

The profitableness, I say, not in relation to the Body or any thing without, but

but to our selves, to whom it is commanded to **ADVISE BEFORE ACTION**, and to doe such things as will occasion us (that is our Souls) no after trouble. For what advantage will it be by Perjuries, Murthers, or any other evil actions, to encrease our store of outward things, and in the mean time to be poor within, to want the good of the Soul? and then either to be insensible of this, and so to aggravate the evil, or if our Conscience be awaken'd to a sense of what we have done, to be tortur'd in our spirit, to dread the punishment of Hell, and to find no other remedy to cure our misery, but by taking Sanctuary at Annihilation.

So apt is he to cure one Evil by another, who solaces himself in his wickedness, with the utter destruction of his Soul, and thinks himself worthy that nothing of him should remain after death, that he may escape Judgment. For if a wicked man might have his will his Soul would not be immortal, to avoid punishment. He therefore endeavours to prevent the Judge of Hell, by adjudging himself to death, as if a wicked Soul were not fit so much as to be. And this sentence which he gives on himself becomes

G

his

82 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

his inconsiderateness well enough, whereby he was at first betray'd into sin. But the Judge of Hell who does Justice according to the rule of Truth, will not sentence his Soul not to be, but not to be wicked, and will endeavour to abate his wickedness by applying Castigations for the cure of Nature, as Physicians heal Malign Ulcers by Scarifyings and Searings. Then he will take vengeance of the faults, endeavouring to blot out the wickedness of the Soul by Repentance. Not annihilating its substance, but rather by purging away the passions whereby it was corrupted, reducing it to its primitive state. For the Soul of Man is in danger of losing its being, when diverted to that which is contrary to its nature. But when recall'd to that which is according to its nature, it renews as it were the lease of its very nature, and re-assumes that purity of being which was corrupted by the mixture and dross of the Passions.

It should therefore be our greatest endeavour not to sin at all, but if we fall into sin, suddenly to betake our selves to Justice as to a sovereign Medicine, rectifying our ill Counsel by the help of better. For when we fall from our integrity

we

we are re-instated into it by a just Repentance, when we admit the divine Correction.

Now Repentance is the very beginning of *Philosophy*, the avoidance of all FOOLISH WORDS AND ACTIONS, and the first preparation to a life not to be repented of. For he that advises well before he enters upon action, does not fall into surprising troubles, neither is he ignorant that many of his enterprises may have an unwelcome issue, but yet he still consents to his present lot, and examines fortuitous events. So that he does not overlook real good out of a greedy expectation of that which is so call'd, or commit any evil through fear of the contrary, but having his mind always intent upon the Law of God, squares his life accordingly.

But that you may know he is a miserable man that speaks and acts inconsiderately, see how *Medea* in the Tragedy laments her self, who when through excess of love, she had unadvisedly betray'd her Country, surrender'd up her self to a Stranger, but afterwards slighted by him, she thought her burthen insupportable, and breaks out into this Imprecation,

Thunder and Lightning on this head descend.

Then she unravels all the wicked actions of her life; then she INCONSIDERATELY wishes what is done were undone, and at last madly endeavours to cure one evil with another.

And if you have a mind to see *Homer's Agamemnon*, you have him crying out under the penance of his inordinate anger,

I am disturb'd, my Heart is from me torn.

And then he quench'd the fire of his eyes, which was at first kindled with passion, with a shower of tears.

Such is the whole life of an INCONSIDERATE man, who by reason of contrary passions is liable to various changes. He is odious in prosperity, pitifull in adversity, headlong in hope, and dejected in fear. In a word, he that is void of good Counsel changes his mind with every blast of fortune.

Lest therefore our life should prove such a sad Tragedy by acting and speaking inconsiderately, let us use right reason as our guide in all things, imitating that of *Socrates*, I can hearken to none of mine

mine but my reason. Now all that may come under the notion of ours, though not of our selves, which serves to the use of reason, (*viz.*) Anger, Desire, Sense, and the Body it self, which is given as an instrument to these faculties; none of which (as he says) should be follow'd but right reason, that is, the rational part of us when disposed according to nature. For this is able to discern what is to be SAID and DONE. Now to act according to the dictates of right reason, is the same as to obey God. For the rational nature being once rais'd to the possession of its native brightness, wills and acts according to the determinations of the divine law and pleasure, and the holy Soul that thus participates of the Deity, becomes in every thing conformable to the mind of God, and frames the whole system and comprehension of its actions, by the conduct and guidance of that eternal Splendor. But 'tis not so with the Soul contrariwise disposed, which knows not God, walks in the dark and as it were at a venture, being destitute of the only rule of good, God and Reason. So many and so great are the advantages of good Counsel.

Add to the other advantages of Preconsultation, that it cuts off the causes of

uncertain opinions, recovers us to knowledge, and procures us the most pleasant and best life, as appears from what ensues.

DOE NOTHING WHICH YOU DO
NOT UNDERSTAND, BUT LEARN
WHAT IS DECENT, AND SO YOU
WILL LIVE THE MOST PLEA-
SANT LIFE.

*That which you know not, do not under-
take,*

*But learn what's fit, if Life you'll pleasant
make.*

Not to attempt any thing which we are ignorant of, is the only way to keep us from sinning. But to learn the things which conduce to the best life, does not only secure us from sin, but serves to rectifie our actions. For Intelligence removes all precipitancy of opinion, and the possession of Science gives expediteness of action. Now both these are excellent things, not to be ignorant that we are ignorant, and to know what we do not, which is attended with the BEST and MOST PLEASANT LIFE. Such is that which is freed from Opinion, and replenish'd with Science, when we are not
puff'd

puff'd up with a conceit of what we do not know; but are willing to learn what is worth learning. And those things alone are so, which lead us to the likeness of God, which make us deliberate before action, that folly be not committed, which will not suffer us to be seduced by any, either by word or deed, which qualifie us to distinguish occasional discourses, which perswade us to bear mildly and to heal the divine fortune, which instruct us how to undergo Death and Poverty, to exercise Justice, Temperance and Continence, which declare to us the laws of Friendship and the honour due to Parents; lastly, which inform us in the true way of honouring the Superior beings.

These and such like are the things which the present discourse recommends to us as FIT to be learnt, which are attended with the MOST PLEASANT LIFE. For the vertuous man has also his pleasures, but they are such as are not to be repented of, and which imitate the solidity and permanency of Vertue. For all pleasure is the Companion of action. For it has no subsistence of its self, but accompanies us in our doing such and such things.

Hence 'tis that the worser actions are accompany'd with the worser pleasures, and vertuous actions with good pleasures. So that the good man does not only excel the wicked man in what is good, but has also the advantage of him even in pleasure, for whose sake alone he is wicked. For as much as one disposition is more excellent than another, so much is one pleasure more eligible than another.

Since then a life order'd according to the rules of Vertue, and adhering to the divine likeness, is truly divine, but that which is spent in wickedness, is brutish and without God; it is plain, that the pleasure of a good man imitates that divine Complacency which waits on God and heavenly minds, but the pleasure of a wicked man (to give them a common name for once) amounts to no more than the gratification of a Sottish Appetite, the entertainment of a Beast.

Pleasures and Sorrows are put in our reach, from whose fountains whosoever draws both whence, when, and as much as he ought is an happy man, but he that knows not the measures of these, is *emphatically* miserable.

Thus therefore the life which is freed from Opinion, is only void of sin, but that

that which is well fraught with Science is happy and perfect, the **MOST PLEASANT AND BEST LIFE**. Let us never therefore doe what we **KNOW NOT**, nor what we know, when we ought not. For Ignorance leads into wickedness, but Knowledge seeks out a convenient season. For there are many good things which by change of time become evil.

Let us therefore mind the order of the Precept, which by restraining us from action keeps us sinless, and by exhorting us to learn not all things promiscuously, but only what's **FIT**, leads us to the most excellent actions. For goodness of action does not consist barely in not sinning, but in **KNOWING WHAT'S FIT**; the former is effected by the purgation of Opinion, the latter by the presence of Knowledge. But if not sinning be accounted well doing, see what will accrue to you, **SO SHALL YOU LIVE THE MOST PLEASANT LIFE**. But what's that? which derives its pleasure from Vertue. In which both honesty and pleasure concur. If therefore what's good and what's pleasant be singly desirable, what will they be when united? He tells you, **THE MOST PLEASANT LIFE**. For he that chuses pleasure with filthiness, although for a while he be
sweetly

sweetly entertain'd, yet at last through the filthiness annex'd to his enjoyment, he is brought to a painfull repentance. But he that prefers Vertue with all her labours and difficulties, though at first for want of use it sits heavy upon him, yet by the conjunction of good, he alleviates the labour, and at last enjoys pure and unallai'd pleasure with his vertue. For if any filthy thing be done with pleasure, the pleasure is gone, but the stain remains. So that of necessity that life is most unhappy which is most wicked, and that most pleasant which is most vertuous.

And so much may suffice for this. But since the discipline and good usage of the Body conduces to the perfection of the Soul, observe what he subjoins.

NEITHER OUGHT HEALTH OF
BODY TO BE NEGLECTED, BUT
A MEASURE IS TO BE OBSERV'D
IN DRINK, MEAT, AND EXER-
CISE. AND I CALL THAT A
MEASURE WHICH DOES YOU
NO PREJUDICE.

*Health is a thing you ought not to despise, }
In Diet use a Mean, and Exercise; (rise. }
And that's a mean, whence does no damage }*

Since our mortal Body is given to
us

us as an instrument whereby to lead a life here upon earth, we should neither pamper it with immoderate delicacy, nor yet pinch it by subtraction of necessities. For both are equal impediments, and alike take away its usefulness. So that we are exhorted by the Verse to treat our bodies moderately, and not to neglect them when either they grow insolent and rebellious, or when discomposed with sickness, that being kept in a good natural temper, they may yield obedience to our Souls which preside over them without impediment. That which uses is the Soul, and the thing used is the Body. The Artist therefore should take care of the Instrument. For 'tis not enough that we will to use it, but we must take care that it be in a capacity of being serviceable to us. And since its nature is under continual generation and corruption, and is nourish'd by repletion and evacuation, sometimes aliment supplying what is wasted, and sometimes exercise retrenching superfluities, there must be a MEASURE applied to repletion and evacuation. Now this MEASURE is that proportion which adapts the habit of the body to the thinking operations of the Soul, and consequently has regard

regard to that degree of HEALTH which becomes a Philosopher. He will therefore chuse such exercise and nourishment as shall neither pamper the body, nor too much divert it from the motions of the mind. For he does not care for his body simply and absolutely, but for his body serving his mind. Wherefore he refuses an *Athletick* fare which consults the body without the soul, and declines all that luxury which is call'd *Σωματις*, as opposite to the rational light of the soul. But as far as a good habit of body will serve to discharge the labours of study and brave undertakings, he will endeavour to get it to himself, whoever intends to live prudently. For to him these words are directed, **I CALL THAT A MEAN WHICH DOES THEE NO HARM;** as if he had said, let not the MEASURE of bodily care hurt THEE who art all rational Soul. It becomes THEE who art an observer of the former precepts, to use such Meat, Drink and Exercise which will render the body docil and manageable to the works of Vertue, and which will not provoke the irrational part to throw off the rains of presiding reason.

Now we must state the measure of caring for the body with the greater attention,

tion, because it contains the cause of all the motions which arise from it. For if the Horse stumbles 'tis through the ill management of the Rider.

Now in assigning the MEASURE concerning the body he puts DRINK before MEAT, because 'tis hardest to be temperate in that, and because it more disorders the good habit of the body. And in the third place he puts EXERCISE, as that which corrects the fulness of diet, and makes way for wholesome Nourishment. For these run in a Circle, Nourishment and Exercise, Exercise and Nourishment. For good nourishment makes us able for exercise, and exercise moderately used conduces to nourishment, which begets a firm Constitution of body. But the MEASURE of these varies in several persons, according to the peculiar design which they propose to themselves in caring for the body. For every one endeavours to make his body a serviceable instrument for what he engages in. The Wrestler for the motions of the Ring, the Husbandman for the labours of the Plough. One employs his body to one service, another to another. But what does the Philosopher? what does he aim at in the discipline of his body? For what will

94 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

will he make it instrumental rather than for Philosophy and the labours of the Brain? He will therefore so nourish and discipline his body, that it may become the instrument of Prudence, caring for his Soul in the first place, and for his Body only in subordination to that. For neither will he prefer it before that which uses it, nor altogether neglect it for the users sake. But will take care of it in its proper place, as of an instrument, referring the HEALTH of the Body to the perfection of the Soul which uses it; wherefore he will not nourish it with any thing indifferently, but only with things fitting. For there are some things which we ought not to feed on, because they dull the Senses and weigh down the Spirit which is kin to the Soul, to material and gross affections. Of which he speaks afterwards, when he bids us abstain with judgment from those meats which were mention'd in the book concerning the Lustrations and Expiations of the Soul.

Such as these he will altogether refuse. And of those things which he may eat, he will consider the quantity and the season, and as *Hippocrates* advises, will diligently attend to the season of the year, the Country, Age, and such like. Neither

ther will he inconsiderately fill himself with lawfull meats, neither will he indiscreetly prescribe the same course of diet to Young and Old, Healthy and Sick, to a Novice in Philosophy and a great Proficient in it.

All these are contain'd in the *Pythagorick* MEASURE, when he adds, LET IT NOT HURT THEE. For all things that tend to the happy life of a wise man, he referr'd in that short saying to the care of the Body, and to what he had said before concerning the health of the Soul, he adds, that THE HEALTH OF THE BODY IS BY NO MEANS TO BE NEGLECTED. So that there he recommends the perfection of the User, here the preservation of the Instrument; joyn therefore this with the other, and you shall find, whoever you are to whom the Precept is given, that to be the MEASURE of caring for the Body, WHICH DOES NOT HURT YOU, which does not hinder your Philosophical purpose, but help and further the progress of the Soul in the ways of Vertue. He calls it the MEASURE of drinking and eating, because he forbids all excess and defect, and recommends what is middle and temperate. Whence 'tis easie to
restrain

restrain our Appetite, Sleep, Lust and Anger. For that which is here call'd MEASURE, corrects all inordinateness in them, and removes whatever grieves and presses down the Soul aspiring to God, who is all mind. For it becomes the Soul in her addresses to the Eternal Mind, to be all calm and serene, and not to be disturb'd with passionate Motions, but to have all well compos'd below, that she may attend quietly upon the Contemplation of things above. This is that MEASURE WHICH DOES YOU NO HURT; this is that which at once curbs the Appetite, and yet consults the good of the Instrument; this is that which discovers the virtue of the Soul, and yet dissolves not the good temperament of the Body. For 'tis a part of Vertue to know how to preserve the Instrument, and fit it for the use of a Philosopher.

But since the care of the Body consists not only in ALIMENT and EXERCISE, but there is need of many other things, such as Cloths, Household-stuff, and a House to contain all, and since there is need also of a MEASURE in these, which may remove luxury and sordidness from the whole course of our life, he with good reason subjoins,

AC-

ACCUSTOME YOUR SELF TO A
CLEAN WAY OF LIVING WITH-
OUT LUXURY, AND BEWARE
HOW YOU DOE THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE OPEN TO CEN-
SURE. DON'T SPEND HIGH OUT
OF SEASON, LIKE ONE THAT
KNOWS NOT WHAT IS MAGNI-
FICENCE. NEITHER BE SORDID
AND NIGGARDLY; MEDIOCRI-
TY IS BEST IN ALL THINGS.

*Be Neat, but not Luxurious in your Fare,
How you incur mens Censure, have a care.
Let not thy'state in ill tim'd Treats be spent,
Like one that knows not what's Magnificent.
Nor by a thrift untimely, rake too clean,
Tis best in every thing to use a Mean.*

A MEASURE (says he) is good, not
only in eating and drinking, but in all
other things, as freeing us from the sins of
Excess and Defect. For there may be much
immoderateness in all those things now
mention'd. Partly by LUXURY, partly
by SORDIDNESS. Both of these are
to be blamed as disagreeable to the man-
ners of a Philosopher, and deviating from
the right temperament of the body. For
too much NEATNESS will slide into

H

LUX.

LUXURY and softness, and too much Sparingness into SORDIDNESS and Slovenliness.

That we may not therefore incur that by our NEATNESS, nor this by OVER SPARINGNESS, let us take to the middle path, declining the Vices on both hands, and making one a remedy for the other. So using a SPARE DIET as not to be SORDID, and so again a NEAT way of living as not to be LUXURIOUS. Let us therefore prefer a MEDIOCRITY in all things which concern the body, chusing that kind of Apparel which is NEAT and yet not DELICATE, and so every thing else. For 'tis fit since the rational Soul presides over the Body, that all things belonging to the body should also be govern'd by Reason, which will neither approve LUXURY nor SORDIDNESS, dictating that all things should be agreeable to its dignity. Left therefore it should be seduced into LUXURY, it chuses what is remote from DELICACY; and lest it should be accustomed to SORDIDNESS and deformity, it chuses NEATNESS.

For example, Apparel not vile and beggerly, but clean and decent. Household-stuff not of Gold and Silver, but of ordinary

dinary materials, an House not adorn'd with costly Stones, nor of excessive beauty and grandeur, but answerable to the needs of the body.

In a word, NEATNESS throughout the whole life, excludes LUXURY as superfluous, and admits what is without LUXURY as chiefly subservient to Necessity. For both Cloths, House and household stuff are then most usefull when competent and clean. For what need of a great dish when there's but little meat? And to what purpose is a sordid one but to disadvantage it? What need of an extraordinary great House have they, who will live in one corner of it? and what is a sordid house good for that is not fit to dwell in? And so in all other things you will find these two extremes utterly unusefull. For both transgress the MĒDIOCRITY of use, and pass into the boundlessness of desire.

Wherefore let all things in your life be temper'd with such a MEAN as declines the bordering vices. ACCUSTOM YOUR SELF (says he) TO A CLEAN WAY OF LIVING.

Afterwards observing how prone we are to Luxury, he adds, WHICH IS WITHOUT DELICACY. Which if he

100 Hierocles upon the golden Merses

had said at first, because he foresaw an easy descent into Sordidness, he would have added CLEAN, always restraining the proclivity of Intemperance by opposing one to the other, that from the mixture of both may proceed a Masculine way of life, and such as becomes a rational Creature.

If we thus order our life, we shall obtain another great advantage. We shall decline CENSURE and ENVY, the constant adherents to Greatness; if always eyeing the golden MEAN, we never provoke our neighbours either to hate us for our LUXURY, or blame us for our SORDIDNESS, to reprehend us as sometimes profuse and lavish, and sometimes inquiring into little things, which are beneath our notice. For all these things will make us be tax'd with immoderation among those we live with. For this is meant by the word ENVY, as if he had said, beware of doing any thing which justly exposes you to the common blame.

Now LUXURY and SORDIDNESS in life, are to be reckon'd among those things which are deservedly blamable by the Vulgar, and in expence of Money, Profusion and Stinginess. In the management therefore of all outward and secular con-

concerns, **MEDIOCRITY** and **Liberality** should shew a prudent habit of mind, and a **MEAN WHICH IS BEST IN ALL THINGS**. For it becomes him who is a lover of tranquility, to shun all occasions of **ENVY** as much as he can, and to be as much afraid of provoking it, as of rousing a sleeping Lion, that he may make a proficiency in excellent things without disturbance.

Now the way to live an unenvy'd and inobnoxious life, is to chuse that which is slender and without Sordidness, and to decline that Pride which arises from the ignorance of what is excellent, which is the mother of two evils, **PROFUSION** and **UNSEASONABLE THRIFT**. The former of which argues a dissolute, the latter, a narrow Spirit. But **Liberality** avoids both, finding out what is becoming in **Incomes** and **Expences**, and ordering the whole Scheme of outward things according to right reason.

And these are the directions given in the Verses concerning the best use of the Body and the things without, that so the beauty of Vertue may be seen even in these.

Now the following Precept sums up all.

DOE THOSE THINGS WHICH WILL
NOT HURT YOU, AND CONSI-
DER BEFORE YOU ACT.

*Be not Mischievous to your self, advise
Before you act ———*

He has already used many expressions of this nature, and here he gives a Summary of them all, advising to abstain from HURTFULL things, and to doe what is profitable, and that these may be distinguish'd to REASON BEFORE ACTION, what is to be done and what not. For then is the time for good Counsel when matters are yet entire. And when he says, WHICH WILL NOT HURT YOU, by YOU is to be understood that which is the true Man, or rational Nature, and he that embraces the study of Wisdom and aspires to the divine Likeness, who knows whatsoever is contrary to right reason and the divine Law, and which hinders us from being like God. Now these are wont to be increas'd upon us by the Conversation of those among whom we live, by the administration of the Body join'd to us, and by our Goods which are for our use. He therefore that is inamour'd with divine good,

good, should take care how he is inticed to doe any thing which is not for his advantage, and how he indulges his body those enjoyments which will cost him a dear Repentance.

Lastly, how he embraces any thing which may take off his mind from the study of Wisedom, and of which he will shortly after repent.

The consideration of all this should put us forward in the course of virtuous living, that when we come to confess what we have done, we may make up our Accounts with pleasure.

To which in the next place he exhorts us.

NEITHER ADMIT SLEEP INTO
YOUR EYES TILL YOU HAVE
THRICE RECOLLECTED EVERY
SINGLE ACTION OF THE DAY.
WHEREIN HAVE I TRANSGRES-
SED? WHAT HAVE I DONE?
WHAT DUTY HAVE I OMIT-
TED? RUN OVER THESE THINGS
BEGINNING FROM THE FIRST,
AND THEN IF YOU HAVE DONE
EVIL, BE TROUBLED; IF GOOD,
REJOYCE.

——— And never let your eyes
 The sweet refreshings of soft slumber tast,
 Till you have thrice severe reflexions past }
 On th'actions of the day, from first to last. }
 Wherein have I transgress'd? what done
 have I?
 What duty unperform'd have I pass'd
 by?
 And if your actions ill on search you find,
 Let Grief; if good, let Joy possess your mind.

In this place you should collect together
 the sense of all the foregoing Precepts,
 that so giving heed to them as to the laws of
 God in the inward judicature of the Soul,
 you may make a just examination of
 what you have done well or ill. For how
 will our remembrance reprehend us for
 doing ill, or praise us for doing well, un-
 less the preceding Meditation receive
 some laws, according to which the whole
 tenour of our life should be order'd, and
 to which we should conform the very pri-
 vate recesses of Conscience all our lives
 long? He requires also that this examina-
 tion be daily repeated, that by continual
 returns of recollection, we may not be
 deceiv'd in our judgment.

The time which he recommends for
 this work, is about Even or Bed-time, that

we may conclude the action of the day with the judgment of Conscience, making the examination of our Conversation an Evening Song to God. WHEREIN HAVE I TRANSGRESS'D? WHAT HAVE I DONE? WHAT DUTY HAVE I OMITTED? So shall we measure our lives by the rules above mention'd, if to the law of the mind, we joyn the judgment of reason.

What then does the law of the Mind say? That we should honour the more excellent Natures according to their Essential order, that we should have our Parents and Relations in high esteem, love and embrace good men, raise our selves above corporeal affections, every where stand in awe of our selves, carefully observe justice, consider the frailty of riches and momentary life, embrace the lot which falls to us by divine judgment, delight in a divine frame of spirit, convert our mind to what is most excellent, love good discourses, not lie open to impostures, not be servilely affected in the possession of Vertue, advise before action to prevent repentance, free our selves from uncertain opinions, live with knowledge, and lastly, that we should adapt our bodies and the things without
to

to the exercise of Vertue. These are the things which the Law giving mind has implanted in the Souls of men, which when reason admits, it becomes a most vigilant Judge of it self, in this manner, **WHEREIN HAVE I TRANSGRESS'D? WHAT HAVE I DONE;** And if afterwards she finds her self to have spent the whole day agreeably to the foregoing rules, she is rewarded with a divine Complacency. And if she find any thing done amiss, she corrects her self by the restorative of an after admonition.

Wherefore he would have us keep off Sleep by the readiness and alacrity of Reason. And this the body will easily endure, if temperately dieted it has not contracted a necessity of sleeping. By which means even our most natural appetites are subjected to the empire of Reason.

DO NOT ADMIT SLEEP (says he) **TILL YOU HAVE EXAMIN'D EVERY ACTION OF THE DAY.** And what is the form of examination? **WHEREIN HAVE I TRANSGRESS'D? WHAT HAVE I DONE? WHAT DUTY HAVE I OMITTED?** For we ~~are~~ in two ways. By doing what we should not, and by not doing *what* we should. For 'tis one thing

thing not to doe well, and another thing to commit Evil. One is a sin of Omission, and the other of Commission.

For instance, 'Tis our duty to Pray, but not to Blaspheme, to nourish our Parents but not to revile them. He that does the former of these does what he ought, he that does the latter what he ought not. Though there is as much guilt in a sin of omission, as in a sin of commission.

He exhorts also that we proceed methodically in our examination from the beginning to the end, leaving nothing out in the middle, which is implied by the word, RUN OVER. For oftentimes change of order deceives the judgment, and makes us favourable to our ill actions through disorder of memory. Besides, a daily recollection of our actions, begets care and studiousefness of Conversation, and a sense of our immortality. And this is worth our admiration, that when he bid us recollect every thing, yet he added not, wherein have I done well? or what duty have I perform'd? But he turn'd the memory to what was a less occasion of pride, requiring a scrutiny only of our sins. And as for the Judge, he has constituted that which is most just and impartial, and most intimate and domestic,

meſtick, the Conſcience, Right-reason, or a Man's ſelf, which he had before caution'd us to ſtand in awe of above all things. For who can ſo admoniſh another as every man can himſelf? For he that is at his own liberty will uſe the freedom of nature, and ſhake off the admonitions of others, when he is not minded to follow them. But Reaſon which is within us, cannot chuſe but hear it ſelf. God has ſet this over us as a Guardian, Inſtructor and Schoolmaſter. And this the Verſe makes the Judge of the days action, acquieſces in its determination whether it condemns or approves it ſelf. For when it reads over what is done in the Register of Memory, then looking to the exemplar of the Law, it pronounces it ſelf worthy of honour or diſhonour. This courſe if daily follow'd perfects the divine image in them that uſe it, leading them by additions and ſubtractions to the beauty of Vertue, and all attainable perfection. For here end the inſtructions about civil Vertue.

He now proceeds to the precepts which make us more particularly reſemble God.

LABOUR IN THESE THINGS, MEDITATE ON THESE THINGS, LOVE THESE THINGS. THESE WILL LEAD YOU INTO THE WAY OF THE DIVINE VERTUE. I SWEAR BY HIM WHO DELIVERED TO US THE QUATERNARY, THE FOUNTAIN OF ETERNAL NATURE.

This doe, this think, to this your heart incline;

This way will lead you to the life divine.

*Believ't, I swear by him who did us shew
The mystery of Four, whence all things flow.*

What is said here is the same with that in the Introduction, that practick Philosophy makes a man perfect in civil Vertue, but the speculative makes him like God by the illumination of the mind through truth, and that in reference to us lesser things should always go before greater. For 'tis easier to use humane life with moderation, than to put it quite off, which may be done by wholly converting ones self to Contemplation. And besides, 'tis impossible to have a secure and undisturb'd possession of truth, if the brutish facul-

110 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

faculties be not subjected to us by moral Vertue. For since the rational Soul is of a middle nature between the pure mind and a privation of reason, then only can it inseparably adhere to the mind above it, when being freed from the contagion of the inferiour passions, it touches them purely. And that it does when it does not comply with the brutish part or mortal body, but as another cares for things of another nature, bestowing as much care on the body as the divine Law requires, which does not permit us to throw it off, but commands us to stay till God shall set us at liberty.

Such a Soul therefore will stand in need of a twofold Vertue. Civil, which subdues the brutish Appetite to inferiour things, and Contemplative, which unites us to the divine excellency.

Now of these two Vertues these Verses are the middle term.

This doe, this think, to this your heart incline;

is the conclusion of civil Vertue, and this other

This way will lead you to the life divine.

is the beginning of Speculative knowledge. For it is declared by what follows, that he who has put off the brutish life, and as far as 'tis possible, has purifi'd himself from inordinate affections, and so from a Brute is become a Man, will from a Man commence a God, as far as humane Nature is capable. And that this is the end of Contemplative Truth, appears from the high and noble conclusion of all in these Verses.

*So when unbody'd you shall freely rove
In the unbounded regions above,
You an Immortal God shall then commence,
- Advanc'd beyond Mortality and Sense.*

The holy Book shews us as we shall see anon, that we shall obtain a restitution to our former state, that is, be Canoniz'd by the practice of the Civil Vertues, and the knowledge of Truth ensuing upon it.

But now to return to the Verses before us, we will consider whether by LABOUR, MEDITATION and LOVE, any other thing be meant, than that we apply our selves to the exercise of Vertue with the whole Soul. The Soul as rational has a threefold faculty. One whereby
- we

112 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

we learn, which he commands here to **MEDITATE** on these things. Another whereby we retain what we learn, which he exhorts to **LABOUR** in these things. And lastly, another whereby we embrace what we know and retain, which he commands to **LOVE** these things.

That therefore we might have all the faculties of the rational nature intent upon the precepts of Vertue, from that which is apt to **MEDITATE**, he requires **MEDITATION**, from that which is apt to retain, **LABOUR**, and from that which is apt to embrace what is excellent, **LOVE**; that by the right application of all these, we may arrive to a possession and firm retention of Vertue, together with an adhering love towards it, which is attended with a divine hope that introduces the splendor of Truth, as he promises, when he says, **THESE WILL LEAD YOU INTO THE WAY OF THE DIVINE VERTUE**. That is, these things will make you like God by the certain knowledge of things. For by rightly considering the causes of things which are originally in God, we ascend to the top of divine knowledge, which is the very thing wherein our likeness to God does consist. And this similitude he calls the **DIVINE VERTUE**

TUE as justly excelling the humane premised.

Let the end of the first Verses be the love of Wisdom and Honesty, and upon that foundation let the knowledge of Truth be superstructed, which leads us to likeness of the divine Vertue, as is shewn in the ensuing discourse.

Furthermore, he confirms the necessity of their connexion by an Oath. For he swears very appositely, that the thorough possession of humane vertue makes way for the divine likeness. And whereas in the beginning he commanded us to dread an oath, his meaning was, that we should forbear it in things contingent and of uncertain issue. For those things are of small moment and casual. So that 'tis neither just nor safe to swear in them, because 'tis not in our power to bring them to pass. But in those things that are present, of necessary connexion and of great moment, 'tis both safe and decent to swear. For neither will the issue of the matter deceive us (the things whereof we now swear being connected by the laws of Necessity) neither will the low groveling nature of the matter refuse the divine Testimony. For Truth and Vertue are not in men only, but principally in the Gods.

Moreover an Oath is used in the Precept, because so much honour is due to the Master of Truth, as to swear by him if confirmation of Doctrine require it. He thought it therefore not enough to use that solemn form, *He has said it*, unless he also swore by him that 'tis so.

Now by swearing he at once speaks divinely of the connexion of the best habits, and shews that the QUATERNARY is all one with God the Fountain of the Eternal order of things. But in what manner this QUATERNARY is God, you may easily find in the holy Book of *Pythagoras*, in which God is celebrated with this title, *The Number of Numbers*. For if all things that are subsist by his eternal Counsel, it is plain that Number in each species of Beings depends on the cause of them, and that the first Number is with him, and thence derived to us.

Now the finite interval of Number is 10. For he that will number farther, must go back again to 1, 2, and 3, till by adding the second *Decad* he makes 20, by adding the third 30, and so on, till the tenth *Decad* being up, he comes to an 100. In the same manner he numbers an 100, and so by repeating the interval of 10, he may proceed to infinity.

Now

Now all the virtue of 10 lies in 4, for before you come to the perfection of 10, there is the same united perfection in 4. For in the composition of 1 to 4, the whole collection will amount to 10. For 1, 2, 3, 4, make up 10. Besides 4 is the *Arithmetick* middle between 1 and 7. For it exceeds and is exceeded equally, falling short of 7 by 3, and by 3 exceeding 1. For the properties of an *Unite* and a *Septenary* are the most excellent of all.

An *Unite*, as the beginning of all number, has the force of all virtually in it self, and a *Septenary* being Motherless and a Virgin, has secondarily the dignity of an *Unite*. For it is neither begotten of any number within 10, as 4 is from twice 2, 6 from twice 3, 8 from twice 4, 9 from thrice 3, and 10 from twice 5. Neither does it beget any within 10, as 2 does 4, as 3 does 9, and as 5 does 10.

The **QUATERNARY** therefore being seated in the middle between unbegotten 1 and motherless 7, it partakes of the virtue of the begotten and the begetting, being the only number within 10, which is begotten of, and begets some number. For 2 if doubled begets 4, and 4 doubled begets 8. Add to this that the first solid figure is in a **QUATERNARY**. For a

116 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

Point answers to an *Unite*, a *Line* to a *Binary*, in that it proceeds from something to something, and a *Superficies* to a *Ternary*. For the most simple of all figures that consist of right lines, is a *Triangle*. But solidity is proper to the QUATERNARY. For in that is the first *Cone* whose *triangular Basis* is made by a *Ternary*, but the top by an *Unite*. Besides, the faculties of judging are 4, Mind, Science, Opinion and Sense. All things that are judg'd fall under one of these; in a word, all things are comprised in the QUATERNARY, Elements, Numbers, seasons of the Year, and ages of Life. Neither can you name any thing which does not depend upon the QUATERNARY as its root and foundation. For as we said before, the QUATERNARY is the Producer and Cause of the Universe, the intelligible God, the Author of the heavenly and sensible Gods.

Now the knowledge of these things was handed down to the *Pythagoreans* from *Pythagoras* himself, whom the Author of these Verses closely following gives us to know, that the perfection of Vertue will bring us to the splendor of Truth. So that for this reason it may be said, that as the Precept of honouring the Oath is
pecu-

peculiarly observ'd among the gods, who always exist after the same manner, so does he peculiarly swear in this place by the Master that deliver'd to us the QUATERNARY. Who ('tis confess'd) was not of the number of the Immortal Gods, nor of the *Heroes* by nature, but a man adorn'd with the likeness of God, and one that preserv'd the divine Image intire in his followers. So that he swears by him in such great matters as these, tacitly insinuating in what reverence *Pythagoras* was with his followers, and what dignity he procured himself by the Precepts which he deliver'd. The greatest of which was the knowledge of the *All-productive* QUATERNARY.

But since the first part is briefly explain'd, and the second relies on a firm promise; since the sacred Interpreter of the QUATERNARY is made known, and also what this QUATERNARY is as far as is conducing to the present purpose, come on, let us proceed to what the Verse leads us, shewing in the first place with what endeavour and preparation, and with what assistance of the more excellent beings we may aspire to them.

THEN PROCEED TO YOUR WORK,
HAVING PRAY'D TO THE GODS
THAT YOU MAY FINISH IT.

*Then to your work, having pray'd Heaven
to send*

On what you undertake, an happy end.

These Verses briefly comprize all that conduces to the attainment of good (*viz.*) the voluntary motion of the Soul and the assistance of God. For although the election of good be in our own power, yet since we have even this our power from God, we stand in need of his cooperation and perfective influence. For our own endeavour is like a hand held forth to receive good, but the perfective influence which comes from God, is the fountain which supplies us with it. Our part is to seek out after that which is good, and God's part to shew it to him that seeks aright.

Now PRAYER is the middle term between our seeking and God's giving, whereby we adhere to our Maker, who as he first gave us our being, so can alone perfect our being.

Besides, how can any one receive good unless God bestow it? Again, how can God, though of his own nature never so libe-

liberally disposed, give to him who has liberty of asking, and yet does not? That we might not therefore pray only in words, but confirm our Prayers by action, nor confide in our own single strength, but implore the assistance of God, joyning Prayer to action, as Form to matter, and all this that we should pray for what we endeavour, and endeavour for what we pray, he joyns these together, **SET TO YOUR WORK, HAVING PRAY'D TO THE GODS THAT YOU MAY FINISH IT.** For we must not so undertake what is excellent, as if we could go through with it on our own single strength, without the assistance of God; nor on the other side so satisfy our selves with bare praying, as not to joyn any endeavour of our own toward the attainment of what we pray for. For so either our vertue will be without God (if it be possible to suppose such a thing) or our Prayers will be without action. The first of which takes away the nature of Vertue, the latter the efficacy of Prayer. For how can that be good which is not done according to the divine Law? And how can that which is so done not stand in need of the assistance of God, whereby it may subsist? For Vertue is nothing else but the image

of God upon the rational Soul. Now every image wants the *Prototype* to support its subsistence, and in vain do you endeavour to possess your self of Vertue, if you refer it not to him for the sake of whose likeness you endeavour to acquire it. They therefore that aspire to active vertue should use Prayer, and they that pray for its attainment should also doe their endeavour.

This is that which makes men look up to what is divine and excellent, to apply themselves to the study of Wisedom and the first cause of all good. For that Quaternary, the fountain of eternal Nature, is the constant cause not of the being only, but of the well-being of all things, diffusing its innate good throughout the Universe, as a pure and intelligible light; which when the Soul adheres to, and wipes her eyes as it were to clear her sight, by the ardent desire of good she is stir'd up to Prayer; and then again, by the grant of her Prayer she heightens her desire, joyning actions to words, and confirming her good actions by divine intercourses. And when she has found out the one and is illuminated by the other, she does what she prays for, and prays for what she does. And this is the union of diligent
EN.

ENDEAVOUR and PRAYER. What are the effects of both we come now to consider.

THIS IF YOU OBSERVE, YOU SHALL KNOW THE CONSTITUTION OF THE IMMORTAL GODS AND OF MORTAL MEN, HOW FAR EVERY THING PROCEEDS, AND WHERE IT CONSISTS.

This Course if you observe, you shall know then

*The Constitution both of Gods and Men,
The due extent of all things you shall see.*

In the first place he promises that those who so demean themselves shall obtain the knowledge of God, and of all things which subsist by the sacred Quaternary, together with the distinction of them according to their kinds, and their union in making up one World. For the word CONSTITUTION here signifies their Conjunction, the Phrase AS FAR AS THEY PROCEED, shews their specific difference, and the Phrase, WHERE THEY CONSIST, their generical community. For the otherwise distinct kinds of rational beings by this distinction enter into one society. For in that some
are

122 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

are first, some middle, and some last, they are at once distinguish'd and united. For neither can the first be middle or last, neither can the last be middle or first, but they remain eternally distinct by the limits of their Creation. And so we understand **HOW FAR THEY PROCEED**. But **WHERE THEY CONSIST** we shall again consider. Nothing of this kind can be perfect which has not the first, middle and last parts in it self, as the beginning, middle, and end of the whole *System*. And the first would not be first, if the middle and last did not follow, neither would the middle be what it is call'd, if it wanted extremes on each side, neither would the last be last, if the first and middle did not go before. They conduce therefore mutually to the perfection of the Universe. And this is the meaning of **CONSISTING** among themselves. For although they are distinct as to variety of kinds, yet they fall in together as the parts of one World, filling by their distance and union the whole constitution and frame of the divine Ornament, which you shall know (says he) if you faithfully **RETAIN** the foremention'd good.

Moreover under the name of extreme kinds is contain'd also the middle, which
he

he intimated when he said, the CONSTITUTION both of Immortal Gods and of mortal Men, for the first are link'd to the last by the interposal of the middle, and the last proceed to the first by the interposition of *Illustrious Heroes*.

Now these and the order of Intelligent Beings has been already deliver'd by us in the beginning, where 'twas said that the Immortal Gods had the first station in the World, the *Illustrious Heroes* the second, and the *Demons* of the Earth the last, which are call'd mortal Men. And it has been already set forth how each of these is to be conceiv'd, which we shall rightly doe if we get a certain knowledge, of those things, in the delivery of which we have already touch'd upon the honour due to them who adorn'd practick Vertue by speculative Truth, and pass'd from the goodness of the humane Habit to the divine Vertue. For so to know the things that are as they receiv'd their subsistence from God, is to obtain the divine likeness.

But because after the eternal Ornament, follows corporeal Nature which fills this visible world, and is intended and accommodated for the dominion of rational beings, he shews further that they shall obtain the good of Philosophical Science, who
pro-

124 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses
proceed orderly to their knowledge.

MOREOVER YOU SHALL KNOW,
AS FAR AS IS FIT, NATURE IN
ALL RESPECTS LIKE HER SELF,
THAT SO YOU MAY NOT HOPE
WHAT IS NOT TO BE HOPED,
AND THAT YOU MAY NOT BE
IGNORANT OF ANY THING.

And Nature in her uniformity.

*That so your ignorance may not suggest
Vain hopes of what you cannot be possessest.*

When Nature had moulded this visible
World to the divine proportion, she made
it every where variously CONFORM-
ABLE to its self by Analogy, and Imaged
the divine beauty upon all the Mundane
forms in a different manner, assigning per-
petuity of motion to the Heavens, and to
the Earth permanency, so that each of
these should bear a footstep of the divine
Likeness. She assign'd also to the Celesti-
al body the Circumference of all, but to
the Terrestrial the Centre.

Now in an Orb the Centre is one way
the beginning, and another way the end
of the *Circumambient*; whence the upper
part is enammel'd with Stars and fill'd
with Intelligent Animals, and the Earth
is

is adorn'd with Vegetables and Animals indued only with Sense. Now Man seems the middle of these two extremes, partaking of each life, the last of those above, and the first of those below. So that he is first of all compared with the Immortal Gods, and recovers his proper state when he converts himself to the mind ; and sometimes he is herded among the mortal forms, when by transgression of the law of God he falls from his own dignity. For being the lowest of Intelligent beings, he is not disposed to contemplate God constantly and uniformly, otherwise he would not be a Man but a God, neither can he contemplate him constantly though not uniformly, for that would insert him into the order of Angels ; whereas now he is a man he is capable of being rais'd by resemblance to that which is more excellent, but still by nature is inferiour to the Immortal Gods and Illustrious *Heroes*. But as he is inferiour to them, in as much as he does not always consider, but is sometimes ignorant and unmindfull of his own nature, and of the light which descends from God upon him ; so does he excell brute Animals, Vegetables, and his Terrestrial and mortal Nature by his essence, in as much

126 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

as he is capable of returning again to God, of abolishing his forgetfulness by remembrance, of recovering what he has lost by discipline, and of curing the flight of things above by a contrary tendency.

It becomes therefore us Mortals to know the CONSTITUTION of the Immortal Gods and of mortal Men; that is, the order of Intelligent beings. And to know NATURE IN ALL RESPECTS LIKE HER SELF; that is, the Corporeal substance in which from the beginning to the end the divine Likeness shines forth. But so know all these AS FAR AS IS FIT, so as they are order'd by Law, so as they were produced by God, and so as they are disposed by his laws, whether they are Corporeal or Incorporeal. For this knowing as far as is FIT is to be understood of both in common. For we ought not out of a fond indulgence to our own unreasonable humour, to wrest the dignity of things as we please, but following the limits of truth to know all things as far as is FIT, and as the law of Creation has distinguish'd them.

Now from this twofold knowledge of the divine Workmanship, (things Corporeal and Incorporeal) springs a most excellent advantage, that we neither HOPE

FOP.

FOR WHAT IS NOT TO BE HOP'D,
NOR BE IGNORANT OF ANY
THING. For 'tis from our ignorance of
the nature of things, that we hope for
what we should not, and project impossibilities. As if a man shou'd hope to become one of the Immortal Gods or Illustrious *Heroes*. Such a one knows not the bounds of nature, nor has learnt to distinguish the first, middle and last.

Again, If any one think his Soul dies with his mortal body, out of ignorance of the immortality of the Soul, he looks for that which neither should nor can be. In like manner, he that hopes to put on the body of a brute beast, and to become an irrational creature by his wickedness, or a Vegetable by inactivity of sense, the same in opposition to those who transform the humane nature into that of superiour beings, IGNORANTLY degrades it to the inferiour, not considering that the essential form of humane nature is unchangeable. For the same man by the alternate possession of Vertue and Vice, is said to become a God or a beast. Not that he is either by nature, but by habitual similitude. And indeed he that knows not the dignity of the things that are, but either exceeds it or comes short of it,
makes

128 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

makes his ignorance an occasion either of a vain opinion or false hope. But he that judges of all according to the measures of the Creation, that knows the things that are in the same manner as they were made, and that lastly measures God from the knowledge of himself, he best observes the precept of *following God*, knows the best measure, and is above all Fraud and Imposture.

AND YOU SHALL KNOW MEN EMBRACING EVILS OF THEIR OWN ACCORD, MISERABLE, AND WHO NEITHER SEE NOR HEAR NEIGHBOURING GOOD, AND THAT THERE ARE FEW WHO KNOW HOW TO DISINTANGLE THEMSELVES FROM EVIL, SUCH A FATE HURTS THE MINDS OF MORTALS, WHO ARE ROLLED HERE AND THERE UPON CYLINDERS BEARING INFINITE MISERIES, FOR A PERNICIOUS CONTENTION IS THEIR INBRED COMPANION WHICH TREACHEROUSLY HURTS THEM, WHICH WE SHOULD BY NO MEANS PROVOKE, BUT YIELDING, AVOID.

Tou²ll

*You'll see how poor unfortunate Mankind
 To hurt themselves are studiously inclin'd,
 To all approaching good, both deaf and blind.* }
*The way to cure their ills is known to few,
 Such a besotting fate does men persue.
 They're on Cylinders still rol'd up and down,
 And with full tides of Evil overflown.
 A cursed inbred Strife does lurk within,
 The cause of all this Misery and Sin.
 Which must not be provok'd to open field,
 The way to conquer here's, to fly, and yield.*

The order of the Incorporeal and Corporeal Natures, being well understood, it remains that we exactly know the nature of Man, both what it is and what passions it is liable to. How it stands in the middle confines between those beings which never fall into Vice, and those which are not capable of Vertue. Hence 'tis that he acts both parts in his manners, sometimes embracing the felicity of the Intellectual life, and sometimes the affections of Sense.

So that 'twas well said by *Heraclitus*, that *we live their death, and dye their life*. For Man descends and falls from the happy Region, as *Empedocles* the *Pythagorean* says,

*Man yields unto the rage of Appetite,
Heaven's Exile, straying from the Orb of
light.*

But he returns and resumes his first ha-
bit, if as he says,

*He fly the confines of this dismal Cell,
Where Murthers, Anger, and all mischiefs
dwell.*

In which whosoever fall

They wander in dark regions of Death.

But the desire of him that flies these
regions of Death, will speedily conduct
him to the regions of Truth, which if
he once leaves by the force of the moul-
ting of the Wings, he comes down into an
earthy body—*Losing the life of blifs.*

Agreeable to this is that which *Plato*
says of the descent. When the impotent
Soul can no longer enjoy the vision of
God, and having suffer'd a deflux of her
wings, falls down to the earth, then she
ought by the Law to inhabit a mortal
body.

And

And concerning the Ascent, he says this, when a Man has overcome by his reason that tumultuous brute Commotion which accrues to him from Earth, Water, Air and Fire, he shall return to the form of the first and best habit, and being made sound and whole, shall recover his proportionate Orb. Sound, because free from the diseases of Passion, which is done by Civil Vertue. And whole, by the recovery of Knowledge as of his proper parts, which is to be done by Speculative Truth.

He shews moreover, that by Aversion from the things below, we should retrieve those excellencies which we lost by *Apostasie*.

Since he defines *Philosophy* to be the flight of Evil. For he declares that men only are obnoxious to Passions, that evil cannot be utterly lost nor exist in the gods, but is necessarily conversant about this place and humane nature. For it is consequent to the nature of things generable and corruptible to be sometimes preternaturally affected, which is the beginning of evil. But by what means we should avoid these, he subjoins when he says we must fly from hence thither; that this flight is as much a resemblance of God as Man

is capable of, but the Similitude it self is to become Just, Holy and Prudent. For he that would fly from Evil must first be averse from humane nature, since they who are immers'd in that cannot but be fill'd with the concomitant evils.

As therefore our departure from God, and the moulting of our plumes whereby we soar'd aloft, caused our descent into the region of Mortality and Wretchedness; So 'tis the rejection of our bodily Passions, and the growth and springing of Vertue as of new wings, which will carry us to the pure habitations of holiness and divine felicity. For the nature of Man being in the middle between those beings which always contemplate the face of God, and those whose nature is never capable of such contemplation, it ascends to them, and descends to these by the possession and rejection of the mind, and alternately puts on the divine and brutish Similitude by reason of its natural propension to both.

He therefore that knows these things of the humane nature, knows also how men are said **TO EMBRACE EVILS OF THEIR OWN ACCORD**, and how they become unhappy and **MISERABLE** by their own election. For when they could
 have

have remain'd longer in that station, they are drawn down to be born by the-rashness of desire, and when they could with more speed have loos'd from hence, they intangle themselves in the security of their passions. And this is that he means when he says, that they neither SEE NOR HEAR NEIGHBOURING GOOD; so that by good he understands Vertue and Truth. And by their not seeing neighbouring good is meant, that they are not moved of themselves to the search of excellent things; and by their not hearing is meant, their unattentiveness to the Instructions of others. For there is a two-fold way of recovering knowledge, either by discipline as by hearing, or by invention as by sight.

They therefore are said to embrace evils of their own accord, who neither willing to learn of others, nor to find out of themselves, remain destitute of the sense of all good, and consequently altogether unprofitable. For he that neither considers himself, nor gives attention to the Instructions of others, is an unprofitable man. But they who employ their endeavours in the learning and finding out things excellent, these are they who know how to DISINTANGLE them-

selves from evil, and who by the flight of all worldly labours, are translated into the free *Æther*. But of these there are but few. For the major part of Mankind are evil and in subjection to their passions; nay, and of unsound minds by reason of their propension to earthly things. And this evil they have brought upon themselves, because they would depart from God, and excommunicate themselves from all converse with him, which they once happily enjoy'd living in pure light. For their propension to the Earth argues their departure from God, by which their minds are disturb'd. It being equally impossible either that he should not be mad who is without God, or that he should not be without God who is mad. Both these finding no relish in the love of excellent things, suffer infinite evils **ROLED** up and down by their ponderous wickedness, as on so many **CYLINDERS**. They never have an intire command of themselves, demeaning themselves ungovernably in all fortunes. Sometimes insolent in abundance, sometimes doing ill in poverty. Sometimes abusing their strength of body to the commission of robberies, sometimes through weakness and disease, prompted to blasphemy. Sometimes pining for the
 want

want of Children, sometimes making their number a pretence of Contention and filthy Avarice.

To speak once for all, there is not one thing in all life which will not turn to the damage of imprudent men, who are at all hands press'd in the straits of voluntary wickedness; who will neither look up to the divine light, nor give ear to the things that are good, but so rush into mortal affections, that they are toss'd in life as in a storm.

Now the only freedom from this is a return to God, which they only find out who stir up the eye and the ear of the Soul to the recovery of good, healing the evil which accompanies our nature by that vertue which leads to the things above. Now there is an evil born with us, and an evil acquired by us, which is the preternatural motion of the will, by which we endeavour to contend with and run counter to the divine laws; not at all considering how much we hurt ourselves while we think to oppose God, blindly seeing this only, that we were able to throw off the rains of his laws. And herein the will plays the *Libertine* and abuses her freedom, in that she dares to depart from God and to side with the PER-

NICIOUS CONTENTION against him, by which we in a manner proclaim open hostility against God. For when he says thou shalt not doe this, we doe that to chuse. Again, when he says doe this, that we doe not. So that they lade themselves with misery on both sides who transgress the divine Law by not doing what is commanded, and by doing what is forbidden.

What therefore shall we find out against this pernicious inbred Companion call'd CONTENTION, which arises from some preternatural disposition within us, and therefore is the more apt to hurt us covertly as a bosom evil? What shall we oppose against it? what remedy shall we apply to the mad CONTENTION? what counterpoise shall we oppose to this downweighing propension, but the meditation and love of those things which will put us into the track of the divine Vertue? For these are those remedies of evil KNOWN TO FEW, this is the INSTITUTION and HEARING of NEIGHBOURING good, this is the freedom from SPONTANEOUS evils, this is the Excision of infinite Passions, the avoidance of the impious CONTENTION, the health of the Soul, the purgation of the raging Strife, and

and the revocation of our Exile from God. For the only way we have to cure our propension to things below, is by the virtue which raises us upwards, if we do not suffer it to run out any further, nor add evil to evil; but being become obedient to right reason avoid the **PERNICIOUS CONTENTION**, and embrace that which is good, not striving to disobey God, but to obey him, which we should not call Strife, but a divinely affected Obedience, a conversion to the law of God, and a voluntary subjection, which cuts off the occasions of unreasonable disobedience. For this I take to be the sum of what is contain'd in the Verses now before us.

First he points at the wickedness of our free will; when he says, **YOU SHALL KNOW MEN EMBRACING EVILS OF THEIR OWN ACCORD**, whom we ought to call miserable and unfortunate, because the Authors of their own evil.

Then he declares their utter obstinacy against all good things, when he says that **THEY NEITHER SEE NOR HEAR NEIGHBOURING GOOD**.

Then he implies the impossibility of disintangling our selves from voluntary evils, when he says that **FEW KNOW HOW**
TO

TO DOE IT; which is therefore inserted, that when he had shewn 'twas in our own power to free our selves, it might appear that we were voluntary slaves.

Then he subjoins the cause of the blindness and deafness of those Souls which fall into Vice. **SUCH A FATE HURTS THE MINDS OF MORTALS.** For our Apostacy from the more excellent things leads us into madness and rash election, which he means by the pernicious FATE, which by inclining us to the corruptible and mortal life, excludes us from the divine Quire.

Then he shews the consequences of Temerity, and how our offences are at once voluntary and involuntary, while he compares the life of imprudent men to a **CYLINDER** roled on a Plain, which sometimes has a direct and circular motion at once, Circular of it self, and Direct by falling downwards. For as a **CYLINDER** does not retain its circular motion about the *Axis* when it deviates from rectitude, so neither does the Soul obtain the things that are truly good, when it falls off from right reason and its station with God; but hovers about apparent good, deviates from what is right, and is roled up and down by sensual passions, which was intimated

timated in these words, WHO ARE ROLLED HERE AND THERE ON CYLINDERS BEARING INFINITE EVILS. But because the free motion of the will preternaturally affected was the cause of the FATE WHICH HURTS OUR MINDS, and of our separation from God, in the two following Verses he shews us how we ought to compose it and turn it towards God; Partly by discovering the voluntary hurt, in these words, A PERNICIOUS CONTENTION IS THEIR INBRED COMPANION WHICH TREACHEROUSLY HURTS THEM. Partly by implying the liberty of healing in these words, WHICH WE SHOULD BY NO MEANS PROVOKE, BUT YIELDING AVOID.

But perceiving withall that we want in the first place the assistance of God to enable us to depart from evil and embrace good, he addresses himself to *Jupiter* in a Prayer for help.

O FATHER JUPITER, EITHER FREE
 US ALL FROM SO GREAT EVILS,
 OR DISCOVER TO ALL WHAT
 DEMON THEY USE. BUT BE
 THOU OF GOOD CHEAR, BE-
 CAUSE THOSE MORTALS ARE
 KIN TO GOD, TO WHOM SA-
 CREED NATURE DISCOVER SEVE-
 RY THING. AMONG WHICH IF
 YOU ARE AT ALL INTERESTED,
 YOU WILL OBSERVE WHAT I
 COMMAND YOU, AND HAVING
 HEAL'D YOUR SOUL, YOU WILL
 PRESERVE IT FROM THESE E-
 VILS.

*And now from ill great Father set us free,
 Or teach us all to know ourselves and thee.
 Courage my Soul, great Jove is their Allie,
 Their duty who by Nature's light descry.
 These rules if to that number you retain,
 You'll keep and purge your Soul from every
 (stain.*

'Twas the manner of the *Pythagoreans*
 to adore the Maker and Parent of the Uni-
 verse, under the Name of *JUPITER*.
 For 'tis a just thing that he shou'd be na-
 med from his power, from whom all
 things receive both being and life. For
 the

the truly proper name of God is that which is futable to his power and works. But as for those names which seem to us proper, they are rather casual and arbitrary, than accommodated to the propriety of essences, as is to be seen in many names which are quite remote from the nature of the things; as when a man of an ill life is call'd good, or one of *Atheistical* principles Pious. Such as these have not the true nature of Names, because they do not at all carry in them the Essence or Operation of those things which they are intended to signifie. We should therefore seek the true reason of Names in things Eternal, and of these in things Divine, and of things divine in the best of them. Whence it comes to pass that the Name *JUPITER* carries in the very word a *Symbol* and Image of the All-producing nature, since the first Imposers of Names by their exceeding great wisdom, as so many expert Statuaries, express'd the virtues of things by their names as by Images. For they made Names the *symbols* of their conceptions, and their conceptions declarative of what they conceiv'd. For when dwelling upon intelligible Objects they abounded with Contemplation, and growing pregnant, were deli-

142 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

deliver'd of their thoughts by the *Midwifery* of words, they gave such names to things which by the very sound and the letters used in the pronunciation, should express the forms of the things named, and convert the attentive Hearers to their essences. So that what was the end of their contemplation, is to us the beginning of obtaining the knowledge of things.

Thus before, the Maker of the Universe was call'd the Quaternary, and now FATHER JUPITER, for the reasons already mention'd. But that which this present Prayer desires of him, he is ready to bestow on all by his goodness, but 'tis our part to receive what he is always ready to give. For 'twas said before,

*Then to your Work, having pray'd to heaven
to send*

On what you undertake, an happy end.

Implying, that God is always disposed to give what is good, but that we then only receive it when we attend upon the divine Bounty. For 'tis inconsistent with the liberty of our wills, that good should be obtruded upon us whether we will or no. Now all good is either Truth or Vertue, both which constantly and uniformly

ly shine forth upon all from the All-producing nature.

The Prayer also desires, in order to the necessary freedom from evil, that we may see the dignity of our own essence, for this he means by the Phrase **WHAT DEMON THEY USE**, which is the Soul. By this conversion to our selves we are assured of these two necessary consequences, a freedom from evil, and a discovery of those things which God holds forth to us as means whereby we may obtain happiness.

The Prayer therefore proceeds on a supposition, That if all did but know who they are, and **WHAT DEMON THEY USE**, they would all be freed from evil. But this will never be. For 'tis impossible that all should at once embrace the study of wisdom, and lay hold on those good things which God always offers towards the perfection of an happy life. What therefore remains but that they only be of **GOOD CHEAR**, who advance to that knowledge which shews our own proper good? For it is certain that they only shall be freed from the evils, which are rivetted into the mortal nature, since they only apply'd themselves to the contemplation of things truly good. And these

144 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

these are worthy to be inserted among the DIVINE KINDRED as persons taught by SACRED NATURE, that is Philosophy, and well exercised in their duty.

Now if we are at all interested in the society of divine men, we shall shew it by applying our selves to honest actions and intellectual disciplines, by which alone the Soul of Man is heal'd, freed from terrestrial labours, and translated into the divine order.

In short therefore, this is the sense of the Verses in hand. They that know themselves are freed from mortal passions. Why then are not all freed since all are sufficiently assisted with the opportunities of knowing themselves from their inbred Notices? Because the greatest part of men (as he says) embrace evils of their own accord, since they neither see nor hear neighbouring good. But there are some few who for this reason know how to free themselves from evil, because they know what DEMON THEY USE. And they are such as have purged themselves from brutish passions by the help of Philosophy, and deliver'd themselves from the bodily Mansion as from a Prison. How therefore does he say to JUPITER, either
FREE US ALL FROM SO GREAT
EVILS,

EVILS, OR DISCOVER TO ALL WHAT DEMON THEY USE? Does he thereby imply that though 'tis in his power to turn all men to the truth even against their wills, yet he does it not, either through neglect or out of design, that they may still be held fast by their chains? No, 'tis Impious to think so.

This is rather the import of the Prayer, That we ought to turn our selves to God as to our Father, who furthers us in the way to happiness. For God indeed is the Creator of all men, but of good men he is also a Father.

He therefore that knows how to free himself from evil, and not only so, but has actually done it, and by a voluntary flight has avoided the pernicious Contention, he it is that imploring a competent measure of the divine assistance, cries out O FATHER *JUPITER*. For he calls God Father on this only ground, because he has already perform'd the part of a Son.

Then he concludes from his own case, that if all did the same, all would be likewise freed from evil as well as himself.

Afterwards observing that the contrary happen'd not through any fault of God, but through the perverseness of the most

L

who

who embrace evils of their own accord, he says to himself, **BUT BE THOU OF GOOD CHEAR** who hast found out the way to free thy self from evil. And that was by applying himself to those things which God had shewn to him by the help of sacred Philosophy. Which things pass unobserv'd by many, because they do not rightly improve those common notions which our Maker has imprinted upon rational beings, as a mark to lead us to the knowledge of himself.

Since therefore that any thing be **SHEWN** to any one, 'tis necessary that the actions of two persons concur (for how can you shew what you have a mind to to a blind man, although you offer it to him a thousand times, or how can you shew to one that sees, if you offer nothing to his sight) both these must be present, some good proposed by him that shews, and an eye capable of seeing in him to whom it is to be shewn, so that from a visible object and a faculty of seeing, may be made up a manifestation.

This being so, let us suppose that all would be freed from evil if their Maker did **SHEW** to all the knowledge of his own nature, and **WHAT DEMON THEY** themselves **USE**. But we find that

that all are not at once deliver'd from evil, it follows therefore that he does not make this discovery to all, but to those only who of their own accord endeavour to free themselves from evil, and voluntarily fix their eye upon what is SHEWN by the intention of Contemplation. God therefore is not the cause why he is not SHEWN unto all, but they themselves who neither see nor hear Neighbouring good; whence they are said to embrace evil of their own accord. The will therefore of him that chuses, is in the fault, but God is no way the Author of evil, who does what is required on his part, that all men may see what is good; but he does not actually SHEW it to all, because at the time when he holds it forth, the eye of Contemplation in most men is shut, or fix'd downward upon worser objects. This exposition of the Verses before us, is both agreeable to the truth and the context. For if it be the part of God to drag men to the truth whether they will or no, why do we blame them as suffering voluntary evils? Why again do we advise them not to provoke the Pernicious contention, but yielding to avoid? Why also do we exhort them to bear events patiently, and to endeavour to heal them? For the way

148 Hierocles upon the golden Verseg

to Vertue by moral discipline is quite block't up to them, if liberty of Will be once taken away. For my part I would neither doe, think, nor love any of those things that are excellent, if I thought 'twas God's part to keep us from Sin and replenish us with Vertue, without any concurrence of our own, which if true, then all our sins also must be father'd upon God. But if God (as it has been said) be no way the Author of sin, we may thank our selves if we depart from good, since when 'twas near to us, nay by the common notices of the Soul lodg'd within us, yet we neither see nor hear it. But the cause of this blindness and deafness is this pernicious Contention and voluntary Evil, which we must not provoke any farther, but by yielding, fly from it; so shall we know how to free our selves from evil, and find out the way of returning to God. And thus every illumination of God by the concurrence of our vision, becomes a DISCOVERY.

Now the fruits of this discovery are calmness of mind, freedom from earthly labours, a tast of divine good, and a participation of the fatherly conversation.

Having premised these things of Vertue and Truth, and having closed up the
pre-

precepts of Vertue in the nightly account, and carried on the hopes of Truth as far as the quiet and safety of the Soul, he proceeds now to those things which belong to the splendor of winged Purity, in-joyn-
ing a third kind of Philosophy to what has been already said.

ABSTAIN MOREOVER WITH JUDG-
MENT FROM THOSE MEATS
WHICH WE HAVE SPOKEN OF IN
THE LUSTRATIONS AND SOLU-
TION OF THE SOUL. AND CON-
SIDER ALL THINGS, SETTING
REASON THE BEST CHARIO-
TEER IN THE UPPERMOST
PLACE.

*Abstain from Meats which you forbidden
find
In our Traditions, wherein are defin'd
The Purgings and Solution of the mind.
Consider this, then in the highest sphere
Enthroned your reason the best Charioteer.*

The rational Nature was produced by the great Creator with a body adhering to it, and so though incorporeal it felt, yet its whole species is consummated in the body. Just as it is in the Stars, that which is Superior in them, is an Incorporeal substance, that which is Inferior a

Corporeal. And so the Sun is all a Compound of somewhat Incorporeal and somewhat Corporeal, which were never once separate and then coupled together (for so they would be separate again) but produced both at once in such order that one should rule and preside and the other obey. And so 'tis in all the Intelligent-beings, *Heroes* and Men. For every *Hero* is an Intelligent Soul joyn'd to a lucid Body, and a Man in like manner is a rational Soul with an immortal body congenial to it.

And this was the doctrine of the *Pythagoreans*, which *Plato* afterwards publish'd to the World, when he compared every divine and humane Soul to the congenial force of a winged Chariot and Charioteer.

We have need therefore in order to the perfection of the Soul, of Truth and Vertue, but to the purgation of our lucid body 'tis required that we be scour'd from material pollutions, and use sacred purgations, and receive strength from God, whereby we may fly hence upwards. And this is taught in the Verses before us, when they prescribe us the way of removing the luxuriant pollutions of matter, in these words, **ABSTAIN WITH JUDGMENT FROM THE MEATS WHICH**
WE

WE HAVE SPOKEN OF. And when they recommend to us the sacred purgation and the concurring aid of God, in these words, IN THE LUSTRATIONS AND SOLUTION OF THE SOUL; and when they give us a description of humane Nature in its integrity and perfection, in these words, SETTING REASON THE BEST CHARIOTEER IN THE UPPERMOST PLACE. For here is an entire draught of humane Nature, with an orderly distinction of the parts. Whereof one is to Judge, which resembles the CHARIOTEER, the other to obey, which holds proportion with the Chariot.

He therefore that believes the *Symbols* of *Pythagoras*, may know from these Verses that he ought by the exercise of Vertue, and by the recovery of Truth and Purity, to take care of those things which concern our lucid body, which by the Oracles is call'd the subtil Vehicle of the Soul.

Now this PURGATION reaches as far as our Meat and Drink and the whole management and usage of our mortal body, in which our lucid one is lodg'd, which inspires life into the inanimate body, and preserves its harmony. For life

152 Hierocles upon the golden Mierles

is a body void of matter, which generates that life which is inherent in matter, by which our mortal body is perfected, which is compounded of irrational life and matter, being the image of that man who is constituted of a rational substance and an immaterial body.

Since therefore we are Men, and since this is the constitution of humane Nature, there is a necessity that all of us should be purged and perfected. But we must observe the peculiar manner of each nature. For different natures require different purgations.

For example, the purgation of the rational Soul as to its rational faculty, is Scientifical Truth. But as to its Opinionative part, the vertue of Deliberation. For since we are of such a make by nature, that we should contemplate the things above, and rule the things below, for the first work we shall want Truth, for the second Civil Vertue, that so we may be wholly taken up in the contemplation of things Eternal, and in the action of things becoming. But in both we shall escape the impetuous floud of the irrational Nature, if we contain our selves within the divine bounds. For we ought to purge the rational nature from that, because it
was

was in being before the generation of the other. But since our lucid body has also a mortal one joyn'd to it, we must also purge that, and free it from its own contagion.

There remains therefore the purgation of the Animal body, which must be done by observing sacred laws, and by using holy arts. This way of purgation is in a peculiar manner Corporeal, so that it heals the material part wheresoever it is apply'd, and presently prevails with this animal body to strip it self of matter, and to wing away to the *Æthereal* mansion, wherein was the primitive station of Bliss.

Whatsoever is done in order to this, (if done in a manner worthy of God and not deceitfully) will be found to agree with the rules of Vertue and Truth. For the purgations of the rational Soul provide also for the lucid Vehicle, which now by their help being wing'd, soars aloft without any incumbrance. Now that which most conduces to the growth of its plumes, is by degrees to wean it self from earthly things, to accustom it self to immaterial abstractions, and to shake off those pollutions which it has contracted from its union with the material body. For by this means it revives as it were, is firmly knit, is fill'd with divine

vine vigour, and is joyn'd to the intellectual perfection of the Soul. What therefore if some Meats conduce to this? Without doubt 'twou'd be a preparative to Purgation for them who accustom themselves to abstain from all mortal things, immediately and wholly to abstain from some, and especially those which please the mind, and provoke the mortal body to Venery. And for this reason the *Symbolical* precepts enjoyn abstinence from some, whose first sense indeed is more general and large, but which consequently takes in at this particular thing, which is almost every where mention'd. This Precept for example, *Eat not of the Matrix*. The literal sense of which forbids but one single thing, and that a very small one too. But if you consider the various sense of the *Pythagorick* Mystery, you will find that abstinence from all manner of Venery, is couch'd in the precept of abstaining from one certain sensible thing.

In like manner, in order to the Purgation of the Lucid body, he forbids us to eat the Heart; whereby he principally intends that we should abstain from Anger, but by consequence also from that part.

So when he commands us to abstain from that which dyes of its own accord,
his

his principal meaning is, that we reject the mortal Nature, but withall, that we should not participate of that flesh which is unfit for Sacrifice, and unholy. For 'tis fit that in *Symbolical* precepts we observe both the exprefs Letter, and the retired meaning. For a continual observation of what is most obvious, will beget in us a care of observing things of greater weight. So therefore let us understand his mind at present, as if he design'd to give us in few words the Principles of the greatest actions. **ABSTAIN FROM MEATS** he says, which is all one with this, Abstain from Corruptible bodies. But since 'tis impossible to abstain from all meats, he adds, **THOSE WHICH WE HAVE SPOKEN OF.** And he tells you where, **IN THE LUSTRATIONS AND SOLUTION OF THE SOUL.** That by abstinence from Meats such care may be taken of the splendor of the Corporeal Vehicle, as becomes a Soul that is purg'd and loos'd from material impediments.

He adds moreover to this performance, the **JUDGMENT** of Reason, which is able to bestow such care upon the Lucid Body as is futable to the purity of the Soul, wherefore he calls it **REASON** the **CHARIOTEER**, as that which was naturally framed

156 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

framed for the regular guidance of the Vehicle. But the Amorous eye is placed above the CHARIOTEER. For although the Soul be one, yet with its eye it contemplates the field of Truth, and by its force as with an hand, restrains its Congenial body, and turns it towards it self, that it may wholly gaze upon God, and be fill'd with the divine likeness. And this is the general form of abstinence, and these are the excellencies which it aims at.

As for those things which are severally deliver'd in the sacred and mysterious *Apothegms*, although each of them insinuate a peculiar kind of abstinence, as of Beans among Seeds, those that dye of their own accord among Animals; and of these in their whole kinds, Rotchets among Fish, and so of many among Beasts and Birds; and lastly, of several parts of Animals, as the Head and Heart, yet all the Purgative perfection that is in each of these singly, is summarily express'd in the Verse, in that it culls out this or that for abstinence according to their natural properties, insinuating by each a purgation from mortal affection, and intending throughout to bring Man home to himself, that so bidding farewell to the place of his nativity and death, he may be translated

lated

flated into the *Elysian* field and FREE ÆTHER. But because the *Pythagoreans* observ'd an orderly progress in their abstinences, for which reason some Precepts seem to contradict others (for that of abstaining from Animals is contrary to that of abstaining from the Heart, unless you'll say that this was deliver'd to Novices, and that to mature Proficients, it being superfluous to enjoyn a partial abstinence when the whole animal is forbidden) we should therefore diligently attend to the order of ascent, which appears in the Verses.

ABSTAIN (he says) FROM MEATS; and then as if some body had ask'd, what Meats? he answers, WHICH WE HAVE SPOKEN OF. And again, as if he had been ask'd where and in what traditions of discipline the *Pythagoreans* had spoken of abstaining from Meats, he added, IN THE PURGATIONS AND SOLUTION OF THE SOUL. Implying that Purgations must go before, and Solution follow.

Now the Purgations of the rational Soul are Mathematical disciplines, but the Solution which carries it upwards, is the Logical inspection into the things that are. Wherefore he uses the singular number, IN THE SOLUTION OF
THE

THE SOUL, whereas Mathematicks comprehends many disciplines.

'Tis fit therefore that to what has been peculiarly said of the Soul, in reference to Purgation and Solution, we joyn what is of affinity with it, and what relates to the Lucid body. Wherefore 'tis necessary that to Mathematical Purgations be added those which are Mystical, and that the Logical Solution should be attended with the Sacerdotal discipline which carries us upwards. For these properly Purge, and perfect the Spiritual Vehicle of the rational Soul. Besides, they refine us from the dross of the brute Nature, and fit us for the conversation of pure Spirits. For what is impure can have no fellowship with what is pure. The Soul therefore should be adorn'd with Knowledge and Vertue, that it may be able to converse with those who are always so qualifi'd, and so the Lucid body should be refined and spiritualized, that it may endure the society of the Æthereal ones. For likeness reconciles all things, whereas by unlikeness things that are never so near in respect of place, are yet separate from one another.

This is the measure of the most perfect Philosophy deliver'd by the *Pythagoreans*,
which

which is peculiarly adapted to the perfection of the whole man. For he that takes care only for his Soul and neglects his body, does not purge the whole Man.

Again, he that thinks it his duty to care for the body without the Soul, and that the care of the body will any thing advantage the Soul, though it be not purged in particular, does ill in that. But he that follows both these courses, does excellently well, and so joyns Philosophy with the Sacred art, whose business is to purge the Lucid body, which if you separate from the Philosophical mind, you will find it has no longer the same virtue. For of those things which consummate our perfection, some are first invented by the Philosophical mind, some are added by the mystical operation which follows the Philosophical mind.

Now by the Mystical Operation, I understand the faculty of purging the Lucid body. So that the Contemplative part presides over all Philosophy as a mind, and the Practick follows as a faculty.

Now of the Practick we lay down two kinds, Civil and Mystical. The former purges us from the brute Nature by the help of Vertue, the latter by holy Methods cuts off material Imaginations.

More.

160 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses

Moreover, the publick Laws are a sufficient manifestation of Civil Philosophy, but of the Mystical, the sacred Rites of Cities. Besides, the top of all Philosophy is the Contemplative mind, in the middle place is the Civil, in the last is the Mystical. The first (if compared with the other two) holds the proportion of an Eye, the other two compared with the first, of an Hand and a Foot. All which have such connexion with and dependence on one another, that any one of them would be defective, yea, almost useless, if destitute of the others concurrence. Wherefore these must unite together in one constellation, that knowledge which finds out Truth, that faculty which brings forth Vertue, and that which works Purity, that civil action may be made perfectly conformable to the presiding mind, and that good may shine forth answerable to both.

And this is the end of the *Pythagorick* discipline, that we may be all over Wing for the perception of divine good, that so when the time of death is at hand, leaving our mortal body behind us on the earth, and putting off its very Nature, we who were stout Champions in the warfare of Philosophy, may be ready and
expe-

expedite for our flight towards heaven. For then we shall be restored to our primitive station, and become Gods as far as humane nature is capable, as 'tis assured us in the next Verses.

BUT IF HAVING LEFT YOUR BODY YOU COME INTO THE FREE ÆTHER, YOU SHALL BE AN IMMORTAL GOD, INCORRUPTIBLE, NEVER MORE LYABLE TO DEATH.

*So when unbod'y'd you shall freely rove
In the unbounded Regions above,
You an Immortal God shall then commence,
Advanc'd beyond Mortality and Sense.*

This is the most excellent end of all our labours. This (says *Plato*) is the great Prize, the great Hope. This is the most perfect fruit and reward of Philosophy. This is the greatest work of the Amorous and Mystical art (*viz.*) to familiarize us and lead us up to the things that are truly excellent, to rescue us from the labours we drudge under here below, as from the deep dungeon of this gross material life, to mount us up to the ÆTHEREAL Splendors, and to place us in the Mansions of the blessed, if we

M have

162 Hierocles upon the golden Verses

have walk'd according to the foregoing rules. For such only have a title to the Crown of divine Immortality.

Since no man is capable of being adopted into the number of the Gods, but he that has possess'd his Soul of Truth and Vertue, and its spiritual Vehicle of Purity. For so being found and intire he is restored to the form of the primitive habit, having return'd home to himself by the collection of right reasonings, having consider'd the frame of the divine Ornament, and so found out the Maker of the Universe. And when he is become that (as far as 'tis possible after Purgation) which those beings are always, who are not in a capacity to be born, he is carry'd up to a God by his knowledge, but with all having a body Congenial to him, he wants place wherein he may seat himself as a Star. Now for such a body that place is most proper which is immediately under the Moon, as being above the Corruptible, and yet inferior to the Celestial bodies, which the *Pythagoreans* call the FREE ÆTHER. Æther, because immaterial and Eternal. Free, because void of all material passions, and terrestrial hurries. What therefore shall he be when he arrives thither but that which he says,

says, YOU SHALL BE AN IMMORTAL GOD, that is, like the Immortal Gods spoken of in the beginning of the Verses, not really so. For how is it possible that he who is Deify'd for a gradual proficiency in Vertue begun at some certain time, should ever be really the same with them who were so from Eternity? And this appears from the sequel. For to these words YOU SHALL BE AN IMMORTAL GOD, he adds, INCORRUPTIBLE AND NEVER MORE LIABLE TO DEATH. Intimating that our Deifying consists in the removal of what is Mortal, and that we are not Gods by nature or essence, but by proficiency and improvement. So that this makes another sort of Gods, Immortal by ascent, but by descent Mortal; and such as are necessarily subordinate to the Illustrious *Heroes*, since these always behold the face of God, whereas the other sometimes do not attend to his perfections. For it will not be properly a third kind when perfected, nor will it be third in respect of the middle, but it will be made like to the first kind, yet subordinate to the middle. For that habitual resemblance of the Celestial which is seen in men, does preexist in the Heroical kind after

a more perfect and native manner. And thus the common and only perfection of all rational beings, consists in their resemblance of God that made them. Now this resemblance is constant and uniform in the Celestial beings, constant only and not uniform in those Æthereal ones which persevere; but neither constant nor uniform in those Æthereal beings which fall down, and are apt to converse here upon earth. This first and best resemblance of God may be well enough call'd the Pattern of the second and third, or else the second of the third. For 'tis not intended only that we should propose God immediately to our imitation, but resemble him also by the best rule, or middle likeness. But if we cannot attain so far, yet at least we reap this most excellent fruit of Vertue, that we know the measure of our own nature, and that we are not dissatisf'd at it. And this is the highest Vertue to contain ones self within the limits of the Creation, whereby all things are specifically distinguish'd, and to comply with the laws of Providence whereby all things according to their several capacities are directed to that good which is agreeable and convenient for them.

And

And thus have we finish'd our Exposition of the GOLDEN Verses, wherein we have given you an indifferent Summary of the *Pythagorick* Institutions. For 'twas fit, that we should neither confine our *Paraphrase* to the shortness of the Verses, (For so the reason of many excellent Precepts would have lain hid) nor yet launch out into the Ocean of his whole Philosophy (for that were to exceed the limits of our present undertaking) but proportion our Comment to the sense of the Text, and deliver only those things which serve to a general Explication of the doctrines contain'd in the Verses. Which are nothing else but the most perfect transcript of Philosophy, a *Compendium* of its most principal doctrines and an Elementary Institution, left to Posterity by those who following the law of God were receiv'd up into Heaven. You may truly call these Verses the best discovery of humane generosity, and with reason suppose that they were not the memorable Sayings of any one *Pythagorean*, but the common *Resolve* of the whole Sacred Assembly. Whence 'twas a law among them that these Verses like so many *Pythagorick* Oracles, should be repeated in the hearing of all every Morn-

166 Hierocles upon the Golden Verses
ing, and also at Evening just before Bed-
time, that so by a continual Meditation
of these sentences, their Doctrines might
shine forth in their lives. Which 'twere
well if we did doe too, that we might see
what profit we might at length reap from
them.

F I N I S.

